MONDAY
February 20, 2023

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
14 Pages ₹ 6.00

THE HINDU

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INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

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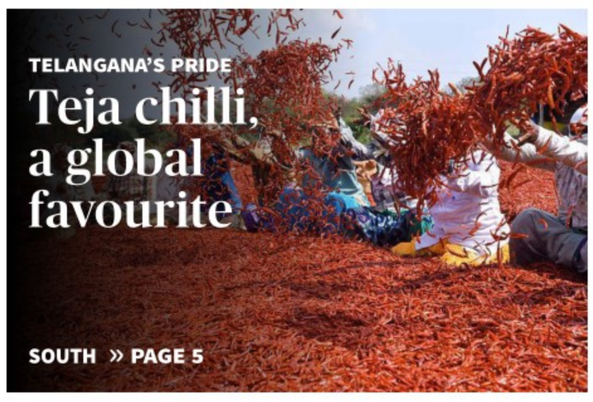
Vol.54 • No.42

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Tirupati » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

TECHNICAL SNAG

AIE flight makes emergency landing

SOUTH » PAGE 5



TELANGANA'S PRIDE

Teja chilli, a global favourite

SOUTH » PAGE 5

THREE-DAY PLENARY

Cong. to discuss role in uniting Opposition

NEWS » PAGE 9

DATA POINT

I-T 'raids' surge amid poor conviction rate

Operations have swelled in recent years

OPINION » PAGE 7

UNSTOPPABLE

India retains Border-Gavaskar Trophy

SPORT » PAGE 13

Chandrayaan-3 lander successfully completes key test

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Chandrayaan-3 lander has successfully completed the crucial EMI-EMC (electro-magnetic interference/ electro-mag-netic compatibility) test at the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre here.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said on Sunday that the lander for the Chandrayaan-3 mission underwent the test during January 31-February 2.

According to the agency, the EMI-EMC test is conducted to ensure the functionality of the satellite subsystems in the space environment and their compatibility with the expected electromagnetic levels.

CONTINUED ON
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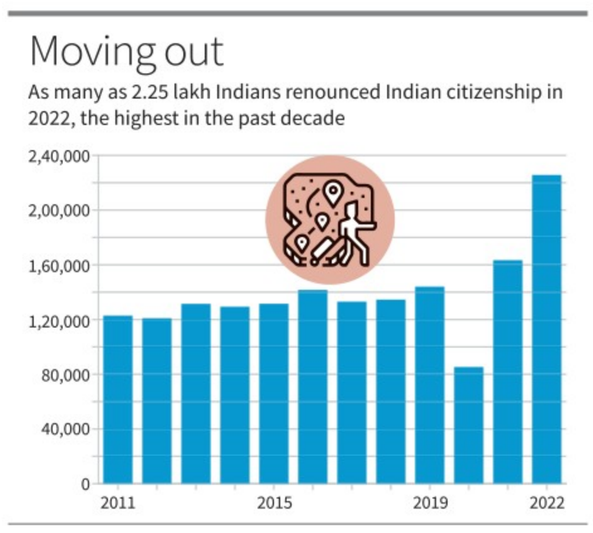
Indians go West, take up 'residence by investment'

High net-worth individuals are making a beeline for such programmes in U.S., Portugal, Australia, Malta and Greece in search of better opportunities, healthcare, quality of life and education

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Pankaj Sharma, 50, moved to Canada in 2019. He followed his wife, Pooja Tandon, an IT professional who was offered a role there. In 2022, they applied for permanent residency that will make them eligible for citizenship after five years, on fulfilling certain conditions.

"The primary reason to move was professional, but after coming here, we realised that our daughter was at a stage in her life that we could not change her education system too often, so we applied for permanent residency and got it," Mr. Sharma said. He said his daughter, who often fell sick in Delhi due to air pollution, has not complained of chest infection since they moved to Canada.



In 2022, over 2.25 lakh Indians renounced Indian citizenship, the highest since 2011, according to data from the Ministry of External Affairs. The data reflect how Indians, especially high net-worth individuals (HNIs), are moving westward in search of better opportunities, healthcare, quality of life, and education, among other factors.

HNIs are those who have wealth of over $1 million or ₹8.2 crore. According to the Henley Global Citizens Report, there were 3.47 lakh HNIs in India in December 2021. Of these, 1.49 lakh HNIs were found in just nine cities: Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Gurugram, and Ahmedabad.

Industry representatives say there has been a surge in requests for residence-through-investment programmes, especially the U.S. EB-5 visa, Portugal Golden Visa, Australian Global Talent Independent Visa, Malta Permanent Residency Programme, and Greece Residence by Investment Programme.

CONTINUED ON
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Clash breaks out over Dalits offering prayers at M.P. Siva temple

The Hindu Bureau
RAIPUR

The Madhya Pradesh police have registered cases in connection with a clash that broke out among communities at Khargone on Saturday following an alleged argument over Dalits offering prayers at a Siva temple on the occasion of Maha Sivaratri.

Over a dozen people were left with minor injuries following the brawl, during which stones were thrown by both sides in Chhapra village.

Members of the Balai community, who are Dalits, alleged that the argument started when a few women from the community were stopped from offering prayers by a group comprising members of the Maratha and Gurjar communities. They alleged that the women were subjected to casteist slurs and were chased away from the temple.

The police said a few days ago, there was another dispute between the two sides over the entry of Dalits into the temple, constructed jointly by three other communities, and the issue re-erupted on Saturday. "Two days ago, the three communities who got the temple constructed denied entry to the other [Balai] community. The other [Balai] community had proposed to install a statue of [Dalit icon B.R.] Ambedkar on an empty land behind the temple," said Sub-Divisional Officer of Police Vinod Dixit.

He said back then it was explained to both sides that no one could be stopped from entering the temple and the matter was resolved.

CONTINUED ON
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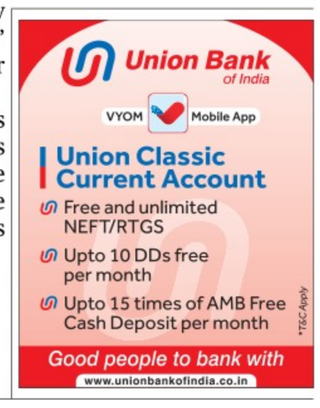
NEARBY

Two women bureaucrats lock horns

BENGALURU
Causing a flutter in the State bureaucracy, two senior women bureaucrats indulged in a public quarrel on social media on Sunday. In two long posts, Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation Managing Director D. Roopa, an IPS officer, made personal remarks against Muzrai Department Commissioner Rohini Sindhuri and accused her of corruption, among others. . » Page 4

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 5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VYOM Mobile App
Union Classic Current Account
Free and unlimited NEFT/RTGS
Upto 10 DDs free per month
Upto 15 times of AMB Free Cash Deposit per month
*T&C Apply
Good people to bank with
www.unionbankofindia.co.in

Standing tall

Golden opportunity: Tulips in bloom at Mandi House Circle in New Delhi on Sunday. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has started planting tulips as part of the 'Tulip Festival' for the beautification of the national capital, ahead of the G-20 Summit. PTI

CBI postpones questioning as Sisodia cites Budget work

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who was summoned by the CBI for questioning on Sunday in connection with the Delhi excise policy case, sought time from the agency as he was busy with the preparation of the Delhi Budget. A CBI official said Mr. Sisodia's request had been accepted.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

THE HINDU GROUP
VOTE FOR YOUR SPORTS HEROES.
Win them an ACES award with your vote.
The fifth edition of the Sportstar ACES Awards is here to celebrate sports and camaraderie. ACES offers you an opportunity to vote for your favourite sporting stars who have made India proud with their exploits on the world stage in the past year.
CATEGORIES
National team of the year
Club team of the year
Sporting moment of the year
Sportstar of the year (Male)
Sportstar of the year (Female)
Spirit of Sports - Best example of sportsmanship
INDIA
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Insurance Partner
Colour Partner
Realty Partner
LIC
NIPPON PAINT
CASAGRAND
building aspirations

Fighting seismic threats the Mughal style

Against the backdrop of Turkey earthquake, *Uroosi*, an architectural feature of yesteryear, offers a reliable way of constructing light houses in the Kashmir Valley using wooden partition walls

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Disturbing images from Turkey that show mountains of rubble piled up on the streets two weeks after the devastating earthquake, have reminded denizens of Srinagar that the city is on the National Centre for Seismology's Zone-V, meaning it is at a very high risk for earthquakes.

One way of saving lives in case of a natural calamity is to reconnect with older methods of architecture and construction. *Uroosi*, a Mughal-era home architectural element, is one such.

Uroosis are wooden shutters used as partition walls within homes, instead of concrete walls.

A five-storey house with extensive use of woodwork and wooden partition walls in the Safa Kadal area of Srinagar. PEERZADA ASHIQ

Ehtisham Qalander, who runs a 39-year-old company called SQ that has been reviving waning techniques and craft in wood, sees the dreadful scenes from Turkey as an opportunity to alter the way of building in Kashmir. He hopes that people will go back to the traditional ways of home construction in the Valley. In the past year, he has constructed eight *Uroosis* and is raising awareness of its value on social media.

"Most indigenous techniques and elements of construction in Kashmir had greater utility than luxury. *Uroosi* is one such, where wooden shutters could be rolled up to make one room, or rolled down from hanging grooves in ceiling chambers, to partition the space into separate areas," Mr. Qalander said.

Uroosi work includes octagonal and decagonal ornamental pillars too. Jalali House is a landmark in Srinagar that has this architectural element.

Uroosi is believed to be a Persian term meaning 'hidden bride'.

"The rolling down of planks with intricate carving is as mesmerising as a bride's appearance during weddings," said Mr. Qalander, who graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, with a degree in polymer science and engineering.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Virat Kohli becomes fastest to reach 25,000 runs milestone

25,000 The number of runs across formats scored by Virat Kohli in the second test against Australia, making him the sixth and the fastest batter in the world to achieve this feat. The other stalwarts include Sachin Tendulkar, Kumar Sangakkara, Ricky Ponting, Mahela Jayawardene and Jacques Kallis. PTI

Banks' net interest income soared in the December quarter

25.5 The percentage by which net interest income of banks grew in the December quarter year-on-year to ₹1.78 lakh crore, driven by a healthy credit off-take and a higher yield on advances. Net interest margin also rose by 17 basis points to 3.28% as banks repriced existing loans higher at a faster rate, according to an analysis by Care Ratings. PTI

AMCs garner over ₹60,000 crore through new schemes

38 The per cent drop in mutual funds' collection through new fund offerings (NFOs) in 2022 over 2021, with asset management companies (AMCs) garnering over ₹62,000 crore through new schemes. However, higher number of NFOs were launched in 2022 compared to the preceding year. A total of 228 new schemes were floated last year. PTI

Maharashtra's sugar production could fall in 2022-23

124 In lakh tonnes, the quantity to which Maharashtra sugar production may fall in 2022-23 from 137.28 lakh tonnes in 2021-22 due to adverse climatic conditions in different parts of the State. Continuous rains rendered the ground wet for long periods which impacted sugarcane cultivation, Sugar Commissioner Shekhar Gaikwad said. PTI

A 27% increase in organ transplant numbers

15,000 The number of organ transplants in 2022 according to Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan. There was an annual increase of 27% in the transplant numbers, he said. Mr. Bhushan also stressed the need for rational use of the country's technical manpower. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The SC on sealed cover jurisprudence

The "routine" handing over of sealed covers in court by the state, the contents of which are unknown to the other parties, often fighting for life, freedom and personal liberty, is eroding public confidence in the 'open court' principle of justice administration

LETTER & SPIRIT

Krishnadas Rajagopal

The Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud firmly refused the 'suggestions' offered by the government in a sealed cover on the formation of a proposed committee to enquire into the Hindenburg report on the Adani Group. This signals the Supreme Court's acute awareness of how 'sealed cover jurisprudence' has begun to threaten the very credibility of the judicial institution. The decision of the three-judge Bench led by the CJI to keep the government's sealed cover at a distance and do "its own thinking", made it evident that the dialogue on sealed covers was no longer an academic discourse on how to balance the right to know and the need to protect national security.

The "routine" handing over of sealed covers in court by the state, the contents of which are unknown to the other parties, often fighting for life and personal liberty, is eroding public confidence in the 'open court' principle of justice administration. The petitioners are unable to defend themselves, not knowing what they are supposed to defend against. Passing on materials in a sealed cover to the court compels judges to accept the state's version, that too, in cases in which the government's narrative is under challenge.

ISTOCKPHOTO

A history of sealed covers

The origins of sealed cover jurisprudence can be traced to service or administrative cases. Official service records and promotion assessments of individual personnel were received in sealed cover in order to avoid harm to the reputation of officers. The court continues to receive confidential documents in sexual assault cases to protect the identity of survivors. However, recent times have seen the government produce myriad documents, ranging from status reports to 'notes', alleged evidence collected during investigation into terror and money-laundering cases. Even court-appointed committee reports, as in the BCCI case, have been accepted in sealed covers.

Sealed cover documents have been received by the apex court in cases such as the Rafale jets' purchase deal, Assam National Register of Citizens case, Ayodhya title dispute, Gujarat Police 'fake' encounter case, Narendra Modi biopic release case, in the sexual harassment case concerning then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, the electoral bonds case, Bhima Koregaon case and the anticipatory bail plea for former union finance minister P. Chidambaram. In these cases, sealed cover had risen to the status of 'due procedure'.

Rule 7 of Order XIII of the Supreme Court Rules, 2013 provides that the Chief Justice or the court can, through a judicial order, direct any document to be kept confidential in a sealed cover if publication of the records is "considered to be not in the interest of the public". Section 123 of the Evidence Act of 1872 provides that the government should give prior permission to a person who wants to give evidence "derived from unpublished official records relating to any affairs of state".

Only in 'extenuating circumstances'

However, the Supreme Court is now witnessing a turnaround. The court, during the Media One telecast ban hearing, orally observed that the government should claim "specific privilege" in an affidavit and explain the "extenuating circumstances" to keep documents secret from the other party. The court said the burden would lie on the government to prove that even sharing redacted copies of the records would prove detrimental to national security and public order. The court has made it clear that sealed covers could be used only in a "small exception" of cases.

So far, a tiny clutch of judgments hold that the principles of natural justice and the fundamental right to know cannot be taken away by the state in an "implied fashion or in a casual and cavalier manner".

The most recent one was in the S.P. Velumani case verdict of May 2022 in which the Supreme Court criticised the Madras High Court's decision to permit a report to remain "shrouded in sealed cover" when the State had not even claimed any specific privilege. Similarly, the court admonished the Bihar government for attempting to give information in sealed cover in the Muzaffarpur shelter case.

The Pegasus case judgment saw the court underscore that the "Union of India must necessarily plead and prove the facts which indicate that the information sought must be kept secret as their divulgence would affect national security concerns... The state cannot get a free pass every time the spectre of 'national security' is raised. National security cannot be the bugbear that the judiciary shies away from".

THE GIST

- The Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud's firm refusal of 'suggestions' offered by the government in a sealed cover on the formation of a proposed committee to enquire into the Hindenburg report on the Adani Group signals the Supreme Court's awareness of how 'sealed cover jurisprudence' has begun to threaten the credibility of the judicial institution
- Sealed cover documents have been received in cases such as the Rafale jets' purchase deal, Assam National Register of Citizens case, Ayodhya title dispute, Gujarat Police 'fake' encounter case, Narendra Modi biopic release case etc.
- The court has said that the burden would lie on the government to prove that even sharing redacted copies of the records would prove detrimental to national security and public order.

How is India addressing sickle cell anaemia?

What has the Finance Minister announced with respect to eliminating sickle cell disease? Is the genetic blood disorder more common in tribal communities? Is there a cure?

Saumya Kalia

The story so far:

Sickle cell anaemia (SCA), a genetic blood disorder, found mention in the Budget this year. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the government will work in "mission mode" to eliminate the condition by 2047. India is the second-worst affected country in terms of predicted births with SCA – i.e. chances of being born with the condition.

What is sickle cell anaemia?

Haemoglobin which is tasked with carrying oxygen to all parts of the body, has four protein subunits – two alpha and two beta. In some people, mutations in the gene that creates the beta subunits impact the shape of the blood cell and distorts it to look like a sickle. A round red blood cell can move easily through blood vessels because of its shape but sickle red blood cells end up slowing, and even blocking, the blood flow. Moreover, sickle cells die early, resulting in a shortage of red blood cells that deprive the body of oxygen. These obstructions and shortages may cause chronic anaemia, pain, fatigue, acute chest syndrome, stroke, and a host of other serious health complications. Without treatment, quality of life is compromised and severe cases can become fatal in the initial years of life.

Does SCA only affect some?

Research and screening programmes have found that the prevalence of haemoglobinopathies – disorders of the blood – is more common among tribal populations than non-tribal communities in India. Research has shown that SCA is prevalent in communities residing in areas where malaria is endemic. Around the middle 1940s, doctors found that those with sickle red blood cells were more likely to survive malaria. Those with the trait in some African countries were found to be potentially resistant to lethal forms of malaria and had a survival advantage. The sickle cell trait thus gave an evolutionary advantage, offering immunity to some people during malaria epidemics. In India, States and UTs with tribal populations contribute a significant malaria case load. Additionally, the documented prevalence of SCA is higher in communities that practice endogamy, as the chances of having two parents with sickle cell trait is higher.

Can it be treated?

Sickle cell anaemia is a genetic disorder, making complete "elimination" a challenge that requires major scientific breakthrough. The only cure comes in the form of gene therapy and stem cell transplants – both costly and still in developmental stages. Blood transfusion, wherein red blood cells are removed from donated blood and given to a patient, is also a trusted treatment in the absence of permanent cures. But challenges include a scarcity of donors, fears around safe supply of blood, risk of infection etc.

What has India done so far?

The Indian Council of Medical Research and the National Rural Health Mission in different States are undertaking outreach programmes for better management and control of the disease. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched a portal wherein people can register themselves if they have the disease or the trait, in order to collate all information related to SCA among tribal groups. In the Budget, the Union Health Minister said the government plans to distribute "special cards" across tribal areas to people below the age of 40. "The cards will be divided into different categories based on the screening results.." The mission will receive funding under the National Health Mission. However, Dr. Deepa Bhatt, a researcher at J.S.S. Medical College, Mysuru, is skeptical about the impact. "The card system will help you to know the status of the patient, but at the same time, my biggest worry is if it will stigmatise the individual."

THE GIST

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the Budget this year that the government will work in "mission mode" to eliminate sickle cell anaemia by 2047.
- Research and screening programmes have found that the prevalence of haemoglobinopathies — disorders of the blood — is more among tribal populations than non-tribal communities in India.
- Sickle cell anaemia is a genetic disorder, making complete "elimination" a challenge that requires major scientific breakthrough.

Forest Dept. installs signal boards to detect elephant movement in Kodagu

Boards have been strategically installed near roads and coffee estates where repeated man-elephant conflicts have been reported

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

To address the increasing man-elephant conflicts in Karnataka, the Forest Department has installed infrared elephant signal boards in five conflict zones in Kodagu district. This comes after the success of the new technology, deployed on a pilot basis in Bannerghatta near the city.

A Rocha India, a conservation research organisation, along with the department, has installed such boards in Meenukolli and Anekudu forest limits of the district.

The boards are strategically installed near roads and coffee estates, where repeated man-elephant conflicts have been reported.

A Rocha India, a conservation research organisation, along with the Forest Department, has installed such boards in Meenukolli and Anekudu forest limits of the district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Avinash Krishnan, CEO of A Rocha India, said: "After the pilot use of the signal boards in Bannerghatta near Bengaluru we installed it in Kodagu. During tests, the boards recorded over 50 detections of elephant movement". The boards detect the elephant presence by transmitters which are placed at an optimum height, which then sends alerts to the boards which start lighting up, and will alert commuters and the public about elephant movements.

"This system, automated with infrared signals, will provide warnings to commuters to slow down. All the signal boards are solar powered," Mr. Krishnan added.

SMS alerts

The transmitters also alert the department about the elephant movement. "These signals will also send alerts via SMS to the local forest officials so that they can monitor the movement of wild elephants in the area. If necessary, the officials can go to the spot for further action," he explained.

Department officials from Kodagu said that they are testing the new system. If this works out well, the department is looking to deploy these boards across zones like Hassan, Kodagu, and Chikkamagaluru districts, plagued by man-elephant conflicts, a senior official said.

Police open fire on murder accused after they attack two constables

Vinay and Trimurthy in a hospital.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Doddabelavangala police shot at two accused in a double murder case and apprehended them on the city's outskirts on Sunday morning. The duo had allegedly killed two youth over a trivial parking row at a local cricket tournament on February 17.

The case had caused a public outcry and residents of the area had staged a protest, demanding stringent police action against the accused.

According to the police, the accused, Vinay, 30, and Trimurthy, 27, were part of a six-member gang and were on the run, since committing the crime.

They were found waiting near a railway crossing in Doddaballapur in the wee hours of Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team, led by Doddabelavangala station inspector Harish, reached the spot and surrounded the area, the police claimed.

When the police warned the duo to surrender, they allegedly attacked constables Hussain and Sunil. In retaliation, Mr. Harish opened fire at their legs, said the police.

The four injured [the two accused and the two constables] were taken to hospital and they are said to be out of danger.

Meanwhile, efforts are on to track down the other accused who are on the run, Mallikarjuna Baladandi, SP, Bengaluru Rural District, said.

The prime accused in the case, Vinay, is the son of a former gram panchayat president of the area. According to the police, he and his associates went to watch a cricket match at a public school ground on February 17.

A heated argument ensued between two groups when Vinay tried to park his car inside the venue. A group that had gathered there damaged his car and forced him to flee.

Later, Vinay and Trimurthy noticed Bharath, an engineering graduate, and Prateek, a PU student, waiting at the bus stop wearing the tournament T-shirt. According to the police, to avenge the humiliation at the ground, the accused allegedly attacked the duo and stabbed them repeatedly before fleeing the spot.

Bharath and Prateek were found in a pool of blood, and were rushed to the hospital, where they succumbed to their injuries.

Skit row: Performances at fests usually pre-screened with zero tolerance towards negativity, say universities

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

After the recent skit controversy at Jain (Deemed-to-be-university), many questions were raised about the kind of screening and vigilance that takes place in universities and colleges before letting students perform on stage.

It also raised questions related to the involvement of faculty members in planning performances and the guidelines which

Most institutions say they issue norms which bar performances which hurt sentiments of religious or social communities

are generally provided to students.

Most institutions said that they issue guidelines which say that performances which hurt the sentiments of religious or social communities will not be allowed during inter-college fests.

"We make the participants sign a declaration form which says that they will abide by our guidelines. In case of disobedience, we immediately expel them from the stage," said Kiran Jeevan, public relations and placements officer at St. Joseph's University.

At some universities, a pre-screening process also takes place, where the material from the teams is played in front of a disciplinary committee.

"We have a strict screening process and this has helped us avoid any untoward incidents so far. We also have a disciplinary action committee which immediately stops a performance even if it slightly goes against our rules," said J. Surya Prasad, Vice-Chancellor, PES University.

While pre-planned content can be screened prior, college fests sometimes also include impromptu performances.

A few institutions have taken the decision to ban such events to ensure that decorum is maintained.

"We have banned some events like mad ads after we noticed that it had some vulgarity. With the remaining events, we reject performances which are in negative spirit. Our cultural teams and organising teams are constantly vigilant during fests," said M. Dhanamjaya, Vice-Chancellor, Reva University.

Universities also said that their students are sensitised regularly and it is made known that they should not hurt sentiments or create disturbance in society. Before sending their teams to other colleges for events, internal screening is mandatory.

"The dean of student affairs checks this. We also need their parents to provide consent letters for their participation," Mr. Surya said.

Text & Context

A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (February 20, Monday), the following article is available:

- Letter & Spirit | On sealed cover jurisprudence
  bit.ly/sealedcoverlaw

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access this article. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access the article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of general public that our client is interested in purchasing residential immovable properties as mentioned herein below, which together constitute the Composite Property described herein below as **'Composite Schedule Property'**:

1) Property bearing New Municipal No.80 (Old B.D.A No.80), having BBMP New PID No.14-74-80, situated at West of Chord Road, 2nd Stage, Basaveshwaranagar extension, Bangalore-560086 and presently within BBMP Jurisdiction ward No.67 (Nagapura ward), measuring 1800 sq feet equivalent to 1/3rd undivided share in Composite Schedule Property, consisting of building with plinth area measuring 2500 sq. feet. built up area with RCC roofing, with Granite Flooring, provided with amenities like electricity, water and sanitary connection and more fully described in the schedule herein below as part and parcel of the 'Composite Schedule Property', from one **Sri.M.Sudhakar** S/o Sri.D.Mani.

2) Property bearing New Municipal No.80/1 (Old BDA No.80), having BBMP New PID No.14-74-80/1, situated at West of Chord Road, 2nd Stage, Basaveshwaranagar extension, Bangalore-560086, measuring 1800 sq feet equivalent to 1/3rd undivided share in Composite Schedule Property, consisting of building measuring 2000 Sq.ft built up area in the ground and first floor with RCC roofing, with Granite Flooring, provided with amenities like electricity, water and sanitary connection and more fully described in the schedule herein below as part and parcel of the 'Composite Schedule Property', from one **Sri.M.Babu,** S/o Sri.D.Mani.

3) Property bearing New Municipal No.80/2 (Old BDA No.80), having BBMP New PID No.14-74-80/2, situated at West of Chord Road, 2nd Stage, Basaveshwaranagar extension, Bangalore-560086, presently within BBMP Ward No.67 (Nagapura), measuring 1800 sq feet equivalent to 1/3rd undivided share in Composite Schedule Property, consisting of building measuring 300 Sq.ft built up area in the ground and first floor with RCC roofing, with Granite Flooring, provided with amenities like electricity, water and sanitary connection and more fully described in the schedule herein below as part and parcel of the **'Composite Schedule Property'**, from one **Sri.M.Sadashivam,** S/o Sri.D.Mani.

Any person/s claiming to have any right, title or interest in and over the Composite Schedule Property or any part thereof detailed below or has any objection to the proposed purchase of the Composite Schedule Property, should lodge his or her claim or objections, if any, in writing, supported by authentic documentary evidence to the undersigned, ***within seven days*** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, our client will proceed to conclude the purchase of the Composite Schedule Property and any claims or objections lodged and received after the expiry of the above stipulated period will not be binding on our client in any manner.

COMPOSITE SCHEDULE PROPERTY
(Description of the entire Composite property)

All that piece and parcel of **Residential properties bearing New Municipal No.80 (Old B.D.A No.80), having BBMP New PID No. 14-74-80, New Municipal No.80/1 (Old BDA No.80), having BBMP New PID No.14-74-80/1, and Property bearing New Municipal No.80/2 (Old BDA No.80), having BBMP New PID No.14-74-80/2, all three situated at West of Chord Road, 2nd Stage, Basaveshwaranagar extension, Bangalore-560086, presently within BBMP Ward No.67 (Nagapura) and, measuring East to West : 90 feet and North to South : 60 feet , totally measuring 5400 sq feet,** together with the duplex building measuring 4800 Sq.ft built up area in the ground and first floor with RCC roofing, with Granite Flooring, provided with amenities like electricity, water and sanitary connection. Bounded on the:

East by : Property No.71 and 72, **West by:** 1st Main Road,
North by : Property No.79, **South by :** Property No.81,

ADVOCATES ADROIT
No.7 & 7/2, Surya Chambers,2nd Floor, 1st Main Road,
Seshadripuram, Bangalore – 560020. Mob: 9448735360, 9844523401
Place: Bangalore Date: 20.02.2023

CENTRE FOR SMART GOVERNANCE (CSG)
(A Non-profit Society formed by Government of Karnataka under e-Governance Secretariat, DPAR (e-Gov) and registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act 1960)
1st Floor, TTMC, Yeshwanthpura, Bengaluru - 560022
No.:E977969 DPAR-CSG0HRD(ICMH)/1/2023-HRM-dparegovsec Date: 17-02-2023

NOTIFICATION

Centre for Smart Governance (CSG), DPAR(e-Gov), Government of Karnataka invites applications from eligible candidates in the areas of IT / ICT for the positions listed below:

1. Technical Project Manager - 05	7. Database Administrator - 03
2. Project Lead - 07	8. System Administrator - 03
3. Business Analyst - 07	9. Consultant - 03
4. Senior Software Engineer - 03	10. Assistant Manager (HR- Recruitment) - 01
5. Software Engineer - 10	
6. Database Designer - 02	

Interested candidates are requested to send their CVs through e-mail to **careerscsg@csgkarnataka.in**
For further details on qualification & experience, please refer **https://csg.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-
Executive Director
Centre for Smart Governance

DIPR/CP/BCPL/4784/2022-23

CAUVERY NEERAVARI NIGAMA LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Office of the Executive Engineer, Hemavathy Right Bank Canal Division, Holenarasipura - 573211

Short term Tender Notification No. 21/2022-23
Dated: 16.02.2023

Item rate tender is invited through e-procurement portal only for the below mentioned work in two cover system as per KW-3 Format by the Executive Engineer, Hemavathy Right Bank canal Division, Holenarasipura Hassan Dist., Karnataka State on behalf of the Managing Director, Cauvery Neeravari Nigama Limited, Bangalore from the eligible Contractors of KPWD/CPWD/Other Public Sector Organizations. The details of events are below. 1.Tender processing charges (in Rs.): Refer as per e-Procurement. 2.The contractor can have access to e-tender document from 17.02.2023 to 27.02.2023 up to 4.00 pm. 3.Last date for submission of tender is 27.02.2023 up to 4.00 pm. 4.Cover -I (Technical bid) will be opened in the office of Executive Engineer, CNNL, Hemavathi right bank canal division Holenarasipura on 01.03.2023 at 11.00 AM. 5.Cover -II (Financial bid) 03.03.2023 or after approval of technical bid. 6.No. of work: 16 Package works 7. Nature of work: CC road and drain, Temple works 8. Cost of work : Varying from Rs. 50.71 lakhs to Rs. 80.35 lakhs 9. EMD: : Varying from Rs. 1.01 lakhs to Rs. 1.61 lakhs 10.Class of Contractor: Class-III and above. Note:- 1.The under signed reserves rights to reject or accept the tenders at any time without giving any reasons. 2. The amount put to tender is subject to variation and the details of tender can be had in the e- procurement portal www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in and also during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, CNNL, HRBC Division, Holenarasipura

ವಾಸಾಸಂ/ಹಿಸನ/ಹಾಸನ/ಎಂಸಿಎ/1114/2022–23

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN:U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No.:SEE/Tr(W&M)C/MRB/EE(O)/AEE-2/T-64/22-23/7912-15 Date:17.02.2023

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-Procurement Mode Only)

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited invites Tender for the following work.

1) Bid Enquiry No.: SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/T-64 C-WEDGE CONNECTORS-LINGASUGURU Dated:18.02.2023 for Design, Manufacture, Testing and Supply of C- Type Wedge Clamps and equipment terminal clamps suitable for various sizes of conductors required for replacement of age old bolted type connectors required for TL&SS division,KPTCL,Lingasuguru pertains to Tr.(W&M) Circle KPTCL Munirabad **Conforming to our Technical Specifications. F.O.R.D at Store/Site basis, including insurance and transportation.**

2) Bid Enquiry No.: SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/T-64/ Repair of Power Transformer_20MVA, 110/33-11KV DEODURGA_CALL-5 Dated:18.02.2023. for the Work of "Dismantling, Transportation (to and fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 20MVA, 110/33-11KV, **ANDREW YULE MAKE,** Sl. No.13480 YEAR OF MANUFACTURE 2012 LYING AT **110KV SUB STATION DEODURGA IN DEODURGA** Taluk, Raichur district on total turnkey basis".

3) Bid Enquiry No.: SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/T-64/Repair of Power Transformer_20MVA, 110/33-11KV APMC RAICHUR_CALL-5 Dated:18.02.2023 for the Work of "Dismantling, Transportation (to and fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 20MVA, 110/33-11KV, **IMP MAKE,** Sl. No.PT-6902 YEAR OF MANUFACTURE 2013 LYING AT 110KV S/S APMC RAICHUR in Raichur Taluk, Raichur District on total turnkey basis".

4) Bid Enquiry No.:SEE/Tr(W&M)C/MRB//EE(O)/AEE-2/T-64/2022-23/EHV Grade Transformer Oil Dated:18.02.2023. for the work of Manufacture, Testing and supply of EHV Grade Transformer Oil (in non-returnable new Steel Barrels of 210 litres capacity) required for Trans(W&M) Circle, KPTCL Munirabad.

5) **Bid Enquiry No.:SEE/Tr.(W&M)C/MRB/DCA/EE(O)/AEE-2/T-64/Repair of Power Transformer_100MVA, 220/66/11KV Badeladaku (Kudligi)-CALL-3 Dated:18.02.2023** for the work of Dismantling, Transportation (to and fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 100MVA, 220/66/11KV, CGL Make, Sl. No.T-10418/2 **at 220/66/11kV Substation Badeladaku (Kudligi)** in 220kV R/S Division, KPTCL, Ittagi, in Kudligi Taluk, Vijayanagara district on total turnkey basis.

Tenders will be received through E-Procurement mode only. The detailed notification regarding the subject enquiry in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** on hyperlink **"eProcurement-KPTCL"** or directly logging on to website **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in on or after 18.02.2023 at 11:00Hrs.** details can be obtained from the office of the under signed.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Ele),
Transmission (W&M) Circle, KPTCL, Munirabad-583 233
Tele-Fax: 08539-270094

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my client Sri.Hukam Singh, S/o Bhavani Singh, has entered into Registered Agreement of Sale dated 15-2-2023,Vide document No.7555 Book-I, Office of the Sub-Registrar, Gandhinagar, Bangalore-9, to purchase the Schedule 'C' Property more fully described from its lawful owner, 1) Smt.Vijaya @ Vijayakumari.K, 2).Sri.Doraiswamy Reddy S.J,3).Smt. Sapna Dinakaran,4) Smt. Venkatalakshmi.D 5).Smt.Niveditha.All are Residing at No25,Chinnappa Naidu Layout, Near Devegowda Petrol Bunk,Bangalore-560070. who claims to be the absolute owners of their respective portion which are particularly mentioned in the schedule hereunder. Any person having objection for sale of the said Schedule Property or any claim / Mortgage / Financial Transactions / or right or interest whatsoever in nature in the schedule Property may lodge the same with Documentary Proof with the undersigned within 15 DAYS from the date of Publication of this Notice. Any objection received thereafter will not be entertained and my client will proceed to Purchase the Property in accordance with law.

'A' SCHEDULE PROPERTY
(Description of the entire composite property)

All that piece and parcel of a portion of the property bearing old No.47, later No.50, presently new Municipal No.59, Manager Ranganna Lane, Manavarthapete, Cottonpet Ward No.29, Bangalore-53, bounded on the:

East by : House of YajamanThimmappa
West by : House of Adinarayanappa
North by : House of Shankaramma
South by : Road

Measuring East to West 42 Feet 6 Inches, North to South 69 Feet, totally measuring 2932.05 Sq Feet.

'C' SCHEDULE PROPERTY
(Description of the property offered for sale)

All that piece and parcel of the eastern portion of the property bearing old No.47, later No.50, presently new Municipal No.59, Manager Ranganna Lane, Manavarthapete, Cottonpet Ward No.29, Bangalore-53, bounded on the:

East by : House of Yajaman Thimmappa
West by : Other Portion to Mohanlal.
North by : House of Shankaramma
South by : Road

Measuring East to West 21 Feet 3 Inches, North to South 69 Feet, totally measuring 1466.25 sq feet consisting of Ground Floor, First Floor and Second Floor building of 07 squares each, totally 2100 Square Feet built up area, having all the amenities of electricity, water and sanitary connections, together with all rights, easements, privileges and appurtenances whatsoever, whether underneath or above the surface,

Place: Bangalore Date: 20.02.2023.

S. UDAYA KUMARR. B.A., LL.B.,
Advocate (Roll No.275/89)
No. 263, MNS Arcade,3rd Floor,
1st N Block, Rajajinagar,
Bangalore –560 010.
M: 9845726723.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my client Sri.Mohan lal, S/o Neemaramji, has entered into Registered Agreement of Sale dated 15-2-2023,Vide document No.7554 Book-I, Office of the Sub-Registrar, Gandhinagar, Bangalore-9 to purchase the Schedule 'B' Property more fully described from its lawful owner, 1) Smt.Vijaya @ Vijayakumari.K, 2).Sri.Doraiswamy Reddy S.J,3).Smt.Sapna Dinakaran,4) Smt.Venkatalakshmi.D 5).Smt. Niveditha.All are Residing at No25, Chinnappa Naidu Layout, Near Devegowda Petrol Bunk, Bangalore-560070. who claims to be the absolute owners of their respective portion which are particularly mentioned in the schedule 'B' hereunder. Any person having objection for sale of the said Schedule Property or any claim/mortgage/Financial transactions/right or interest whatsoever in nature in the Schedule Property may lodge the same with Documentary Proof with the undersigned within 15 DAYS from the date of Publication of this Notice. Any objection received thereafter will not be entertained and my client will proceed to Purchase the Property in accordance with law.

'A' SCHEDULE PROPERTY
(Description of the entire composite property)

All that piece and parcel of a portion of the property bearing old No.47, later No.50, presently new Municipal No.59, Manager Ranganna Lane, Manavarthapete, Cottonpet Ward No.29, Bangalore-53 bounded on the:

East by : House of Yajaman Thimmappa
West by : House of Adinarayanappa
North by : House of Shankaramma
South by : Road

Measuring East to West 42 Feet 6 Inches, North to South 69 Feet, totally measuring 2932.05 Sq Feet.

'B' SCHEDULE PROPERTY
(Description of the property offered for sale)

All that piece and parcel of the Western Portion of the property bearing old No.47, later No.50, presently new Municipal No.59, Manager Ranganna Lane, Manavarthapete, Cottonpet Ward No.29, Bangalore-53 bounded on the:

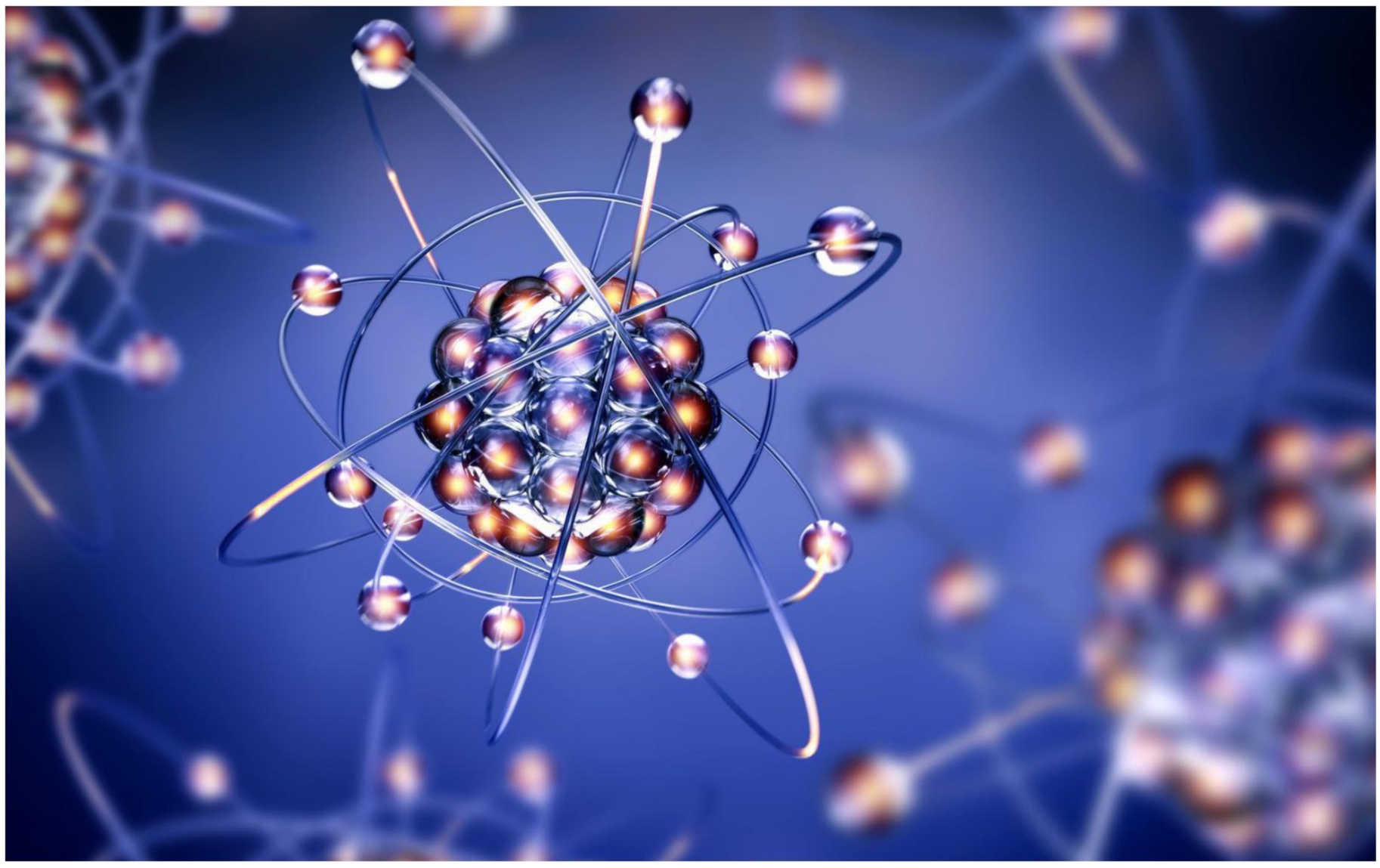
East by : Other Portion of Hukum Singh
West by : House of Adinaryanappa.
North by : House of Shankaramma
South by : Road

Measuring East to West 21 Feet 3 Inches, North to South 69 Feet, totally measuring 1466.25 sq feet consisting of Ground Floor, First Floor and Second Floor building of 07 squares each, totally 2100 Square Feet built up area, having all the amenities of electricity, water and sanitary connections, together with all rights, easements, privileges and appurtenances whatsoever, whether underneath or above the surface.

Place: Bangalore Date: 20.02.2023.

S. UDAYA KUMARR. B.A., LL.B.,
Advocate (Roll No.275/89)
No. 263, MNS Arcade,3rd Floor,
1st N Block, Rajajinagar,
Bangalore –560 010. M: 9845726723.

ABSTRACT



ISTOCKPHOTO

Measuring an electron's magnetic moment with extreme accuracy

In a new study, physicists reported measuring the electron's magnetic moment to a value which is 2.2 times more accurate than the previous best. This, however, has raised some questions about one of physics's most successful theories — the Standard Model of particle physics

Vasudevan Mukunth

X. Fan, T. G. Myers, B. A. D. Sukra, and G. Gabrielse, 'Measurement of the Electron Magnetic Moment', Phys. Rev. Lett. 130, 071801, 13 February 2023

In an astonishing feat of metrology, physicists recently reported measuring the electron's magnetic moment with a precision of 0.13 parts per trillion (ppt). The resulting measurement is 2.2 times more accurate than the previous best, recorded 14 years ago. More importantly, it's the most precise test so far of a theory that has both comforted and baffled physicists – the Standard Model of particle physics – and therein lies the rub.

The Standard Model

The Standard Model (SM) is the theory that describes the properties of all subatomic particles, classifies them into different groups, and determines how they're affected by three of the four fundamental forces of nature: strong-nuclear force, weak-nuclear force, and electromagnetic force (it can't explain gravity).

In the 1960s, physicists used SM to predict the existence of a particle called the Higgs boson, which was finally discovered in 2012. Similarly, the SM has allowed physicists to successfully predict the existence and properties of dozens of particles and is considered to be one of the most successful theories in the history of physics. However, it still can't explain why the universe has more matter than antimatter, what dark matter is, or what dark energy is. In one strategy to crack these still-open questions, physicists have tested different SM predictions to higher and higher limits and checked whether the predictions agree with the observations.

So far, they have all agreed.

How does the electron's magnetic moment matter?

The SM's most precise prediction is of the electron's magnetic moment. Physically, the magnetic moment describes how willing an electron is to align itself in the direction of a magnetic field. Mathematically, it's equal to $-\mu/\mu B$. Here, μ (pronounced mew) is the electron's magnetic moment (measured in amperes sq.metres) and μB is a physical constant called the Bohr magneton. Together, $-\mu/\mu B$ is a dimensionless number.

In the new study, researchers in the U.S. suspended a single electron in a magnetic field at an ultracold temperature inside a vacuum chamber, and measured currents induced in nearby electrodes by the electron's movement. They measured the value of $-\mu/\mu B$ to be 1.00115965218059, within 0.13 ppt.

They achieved such a precise result by closely controlling the electric fields that hold the electron in place, stabilising the magnetic field, and finely adjusting the physical properties of the hardware, thus subtracting the sources of uncertainty that could affect the data. As a result, to quote the physicists writing in their preprint paper, "The most precise prediction of the SM agrees with the most precise determination of a property of an elementary particle" to 1 ppt.

While the result could be good for the SM, it is also affected by two open questions.

Implications of the result

First, the electron and the muon are very similar particles, but the muon is around 207 times heavier. Multiple measurements until 2021 have found that the muon's magnetic moment disagrees with the SM prediction by about 0.00000000251. If this is the handiwork of beyond-SM forces acting on the particle, their effects should be visible on the electron's magnetic moment as well. But because the electron is lighter, the effects will be 40,000 times weaker. By achieving such a highly precise result, the new result suggests that the physicists couldn't find these signs.

Second, a series of mathematical calculations connect the data that physicists record in an experiment and the value of the electron's magnetic moment. One of these calculations involves the fine structure constant (α) – a universal constant that specifies the strength with which an electron couples to the electromagnetic field. (If it couples more strongly, the field will exert a greater force on the electron.)

Two studies published in 2018 and 2020 measured the value of α and reached two distinct answers differing by 0.00000016. They should have reached the same answer since α is a constant. If this discrepancy is resolved, the physicists' measurement can test the SM prediction to 10 times more precision.

Will we ever find evidence of beyond-SM forces?

Physicists will test as many of the SM's predictions as they can, to the extent they can, to look for a crack in its façade. They already have some leads – the SM says neutrinos should be massless, but they aren't; and of course the muon anomaly.

Physicists have also built detectors to look for different kinds of hypothetical dark-matter particles, are combing through astronomical data to make sense of dark energy, and are scrutinising each other's calculations. Many of them are also debating whether they need an even larger supercollider to succeed the Large Hadron Collider. The group that measured the electron's magnetic moment itself has plans to upgrade its setup and repeat the measurement with the electron's anti-particle, the positron.

All together, the community hopes that at least one of these efforts, guided by the principles they uncover in their theoretical studies, will reveal a glimpse of a world beyond the Standard Model.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

On February 20, 125 years ago, the legendary Enzo Ferrari was born. A quiz on the man and the iconic brand that he created

V. V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Ferrari was founded by Enzo in 1939 as the Auto Avio Costruzioni from the racing division of which famous automobile brand?

QUESTION 2
The 1947 125S is considered the first Ferrari "civilians" could purchase. How many were manufactured initially?

QUESTION 3
Connect 'Cavallino Rampante' and Count Francesco Baracca to the legend of Ferrari.

QUESTION 4
Scuderia Ferrari is the oldest surviving and most successful Formula One team. When did it start competing and who was its first driver to win an F1 race?

QUESTION 5
Apart from the public's 67.09% and Pierro Ferrari's 10% ownership, which company founded by Giovanni Agnelli (of Fiat fame) owns 22.91% of the iconic car maker?

QUESTION 6
Which F1 legend is the team's most successful driver with five consecutive drivers' titles and 72 Grands Prix for the team?

QUESTION 7
In which Asian city is the Ferrari World theme park that is said to have the world's fastest roller coaster?

QUESTION 8
Apart from Modena in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, which town close to it is also considered the home of Ferrari?

Visual question:
Identify this Finn, the last Ferrari driver to win a Formula One championship, way back in 2007. AFP

Questions and Answers to the February 17 edition of the daily quiz: 1. This new lizard species discovered in coastal Kerala was named after one of the world's most well known broadcasters. **Ans: Sitana attenboroughii; Sir David Attenborough**
2. The original presenter of *BBC HARDtalk*. **Ans: Tim Sebastian**
3. Modelled on a long running quiz show in the BBC, the Indian version of this show ran for five years. The winner of the first edition was this individual. **Ans: *Mastermind India*; Dayita Datta**
4. The book version of this BBC sitcom was translated into Chinese by Cheng Hong whose husband went on to become the Prime Minister of China. **Ans: Yes Minister; The husband's name is Le Keqiang**
5. This six member comedy troupe made their debut in a *BBC* show. **Ans: Monty Python; Monty Python's Flying circus was their debut show**
Visual: This police box from a popular science fiction show serves this function. **Ans: TARDIS, time travelling space craft**
Early Birds: Daksh Yadav| Moumita Roy Basu| V. Siddhartha| Manish Babal

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

His new story does not ring true to me

I think he made it up as his previous story was pooh-poohed by the boss and the supervisor

S. Upendran

What is the meaning of the expression 'ring of truth'? (T Ganesh, Nellore)

The 'ring' in this rather informal expression has nothing to do with the ring that we wear on the finger or the ear. It has more to do with sound; like the ring of a telephone, a doorbell, etc. In this idiom, it has to do with the sound a coin makes when it is dropped. When someone gives you an explanation as to why he was late, and you respond by saying, 'The explanation has a ring of truth', what you are suggesting is that it sounds true. The explanation that the person has provided is believable; there is a semblance of truth in it. Nowadays, many people have reduced the idiom to 'rings true' and 'does not ring true'.

I don't believe her. Her story doesn't ring true.

In the past, coins were made of precious metals like gold, silver, copper, etc. To determine if a coin was genuine, people often dropped them on a hard surface and listened. If there wasn't a proper metallic ring, they knew that the coin in question was a counterfeit.

Which is correct: 'The audience was' or 'The audience were'? (K.P. Peter, Ernakulam)

Dictionaries give examples of this noun being followed by both singular and plural verbs. There are many nouns in English which can be followed by a singular verb or a plural one. For example, nouns like 'team', government, 'jury', 'staff', 'committee', etc. can be followed by a singular or a plural verb. Which verb you choose to use in a sentence will depend upon the meaning you wish to convey. Take for example, the noun 'government'. If you think of it as one big entity, then you use a singular verb. If, on the other hand, you see each department as being a separate entity, then you use a plural verb. The same is true of the noun 'audience'; if you consider everyone sitting in an auditorium as being part of a single unit, then you use a singular verb; otherwise, plural. By the way, both 'audience' and 'audio' come from the same root word. If you are member of an audience, you have come to hear or listen to something.

The audience was bored by the speech.

What is the meaning of 'pooh-pooh'? (Kamal Laddha, Bengaluru)

The 'ooh' in the two words are pronounced like the 'ue' in 'blue', 'clue' and 'glue'. When pronounced, it is the second 'pooh' that gets the main stress: pooh-POOH. When somebody makes a suggestion and you pooh-pooh it, what you are doing is dismissing it. You are of the opinion that the suggestion is rather foolish, and therefore, people should not waste time even considering it. This informal expression carries with it the sense that you have total contempt for the individual's suggestion.

At the meeting, the teacher pooh-poohed many ideas.

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Cognoscente:
an expert able to appreciate a field; especially in the fine arts

Synonyms: connoisseur

Usage: *My boss has a reputation among film cognoscenti.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/cognoscentepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˌkɒgnəˈʃɛnti,ˌkɒnjəˈʃɛnti/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, FEB. 20		
RISE	06:40	SET 18:26
RISE	06:43	SET 18:40
TUESDAY, FEB. 21		
RISE	06:40	SET 18:27
RISE	07:32	SET 19:40
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 22		
RISE	06:39	SET 18:27
RISE	08:15	SET 20:36

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	32	21
Mysuru	32	15
Bengaluru	32	17

Bengaluru Today
32°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be little warm. Night also will be cool and hazy.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
31°C A dry weather to continue. Day will be slight warm. Night will be slight cool with haze and mist.

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THE HINDU
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Namma Metro project has claimed 38 lives till date: CM

In a written response to JD(S) MLC T.A. Sharavana in the State legislature, Bommai said compensation of ₹3.15 crore has been disbursed to the families of the deceased and the injured

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The State government has revealed that the Namma Metro project has claimed the lives of 38 people till date.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who also holds the portfolio of Bengaluru Development, which includes BMRCL, in a written response to T.A. Sharavana, JD(S) MLC, in the ongoing session of the State legislature, had stated that till date, accidents involving the metro rail project affected a total of 50 people, of which 38 died.

The foundation for the metro rail project was laid in 2006 and since then, BMRCL has been executing the project in a phased manner.

In Phase I, 42.3 km of metro lines were made operational. Under Phase II, a total of 72 km lines are being implemented, of which 14 km have opened for public.

BMRCL is executing 55 km of metro network from Central Silk Board to Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) under Phase II A & B.

Among those who lost their lives, the majority are construction workers.

The under-construction reinforcement structure for Namma Metro pillar that collapsed on the Outer Ring Road. K. MURALI KUMAR

On January 10, a woman and her two-year-old son died after an under-construction metro reinforcement cage fell on a moving bike. Luckily, the husband of the woman and their daughter had a narrow escape.

The incident happened near HBR Layout on the Outer Ring Road. Alleged serious lapses, on part of the contractor executing the work and the engineers of BMRCL, forced the agency to stall the construction works of pillars designed for above 12 metres.

In his response to questions raised by another MLC Prakash K. Rathod, the CM has said that the Govindapura police are investigating the case, following a complaint from the husband of the deceased.

An expert from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, has filed a detailed report on the incident and further safety measures will be taken, based on the report.

The response from the Chief Minister stated that a compensation of ₹3,15,74,39 crore, to the families of the deceased and the injured, has been disbursed till date.

The response also stated that three engineers were suspended and a penalty of ₹1.77 crore imposed on the contractors.

In the recent accident, BMRCL paid compensation of ₹20 lakh to the family members and a penalty of ₹15 lakh imposed on the contractor.

As per the order of BMRCL, the contractor has suspended three of its employees for the lapses. BMRCL has also served notice to the contractor.

"To avoid accidents, as a safety and precautionary measure, while reaching an agreement the contractors have to follow the instructions on safety, health and environment manual," stated the response.

It can be recalled that after the recent incident, the High Court of Karnataka initiated *suo motu* PIL proceedings on the safety issues in executing the Namma Metro project.

KSHRC members to retire shortly; work on new appointments yet to start

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

But for an immediate intervention to appoint new members, the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission will likely be defanged, with its incumbent office-bearers all set to retire shortly.

With the Assembly elections scheduled for May, the model code of conduct is expected to kick in from March last week.

Unless new appointments are made by then, the KSHRC will be headless during the election season, say human rights activists and incumbent office-bearers. K.B. Changappa, a retired district and sessions judge, retired from the commission recently. Another member, Rupak Kumar Dutta, former Director-General of Police (DGP), will retire on February 24, and incumbent chairman D.H. Waghela, former Chief Justice of the Karnataka, the Odisha, and the Bombay High Courts, will retire on March 12.

The government is yet to start any process to make new appointments. The entire process will take over a month.

"Successive governments have always neglected the autonomous commission. But ahead of a key election season, we demand the government to take immediate action to appoint new members and chairperson before the model code of conduct kicks in," said T. Narasimhamurthy, city-based advocate and human rights activist.

Though the commission's bureaucracy will continue, including the police wing, their focus will mostly be on completing pending inquiries, which are over a thousand.

CRS to inspect speed trials of special train today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Commissioner of Railway Safety (Southern Circle) will conduct statutory inspection of speed trials of a special train between Carmelaram and Heelalige, for a distance of 10.5 km., on Monday.

On this stretch, the Rail Infrastructure Development Company (Karnataka) Limited (KRIDE) has completed the doubling of the line. The stretch is part of a doubling project between Baiyappanahalli and Hosur.

In a public notice issued by the KRIDE, it stated that on the newly-laid track, the train will run at a speed of 120 kmph and, subsequently regular trains will be introduced on this line.

The notice cautioned the public not to trespass on the railway line as it would endanger their lives. The notice also stated those who violated the rules would be prosecuted.

Once completed, the project will help in running more commuter trains between Bengaluru Cantonment and Hosur, connecting the Electronics City.

Pending arrears from KSAPS crippling work against HIV/AIDS in Karnataka, claim NGOs

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

Despite an order from the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), the Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society (KSAPS) has allegedly not paid arrears of ₹9 crore to various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), which are engaged with Targeted Intervention Programmes (TIP) to prevent HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

With some arrears pending since 2013, NGOs and CBOs allege they are facing a liability fund crisis, which has begun to severely affect their work in the State.

NACO directed KSAPS, on January 16, 2023, to clear dues and submit a report on the action taken in a week.

After their many appeals to clear dues reportedly falling on deaf ears, the NGOs and CBOs have now decided to stage a protest.

There are around 68 NGOs and CBOs implementing TIPs to prevent HIV/AIDS and STIs within high-risk communities, such as men having sex with men, transgenders, female sex workers, and other key populations, which are supported and funded by KSAPS.

The NGOs and CBOs are creating awareness about HIV/AIDS, promoting the use of condoms and lubricants within the community, and organising meetings, seminars through peer educators and outreach workers.

However, KSAPS has not paid arrears of ₹9 crore in 10 years, which ranges between ₹2 lakh and ₹80 lakh to individual NGOs/CBOs.

"Most of the TIPs have not received their liability funds since 2013, which has created a punishing fund crunch within NGOs and CBOs. We are working with marginalised and poor communities that depend on sex work and begging. A few of our staff members are living with HIV. Many peer educators and outreach workers have already died without getting any payment for the work done. Some have even taken us to court over pending dues," said Aditya, a member of the Targeted Intervention Team from Gadag, adding that the community plans to organise a large protest soon.

Despite trying to reach her repeatedly, K. Leelavathi, Project Director, KSAPS, was not available for comment.

INBRIEF

Residents protest against flyover project wearing black

Continuing their protest against the Sankey flyover and road widening project, residents of the areas around Sankey Tank walked in black attire on Sunday morning. The project is being opposed on the grounds of tree felling and ecological impact on the lake.

Citizens for Sankey, the collective which had organised the walk said that while 91% of residents of Sadashivanagar opposed the flyover project, 4,000 students had written postcards to the Chief Minister requesting him to stop the project. "More than a thousand citizens have sent objections to the Forest Department, the BBMP against the felling of trees. As many as 27,000 people have signed a petition against this project," the collective said.

Gang steals mobile phone from food delivery executive

A gang of three armed men, on a motorcycle, stole a mobile phone from a food delivery executive, while he was on his way to deliver a parcel near Lakshmi Park in Padmanabhanagar early on Sunday.

The victim, identified as Naveen Kumar, was heading to deliver the food after collecting the parcel from a hotel in Jayanagar. The accused confronted him near Lakshmi Park, threatened him with an iron rod, and snatched his mobile phone and sped away.

Based on a complaint, the Banashankari police are now verifying the CCTV camera footage to identify the accused.

Food delivery executive killed in road accident

A 20-year-old food delivery executive was killed in a hit-and-run case on Jalabhavan Road under Mico Layout police station limits on Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Kamil Ahmed, a native of Hassan and a resident of J.C. Nagar. He was on his way to deliver food, when an unidentified vehicle knocked down his scooter at around 5.30 a.m.

The Mico Layout traffic police have registered a case and are verifying the CCTV camera footage on the road to identify the vehicle.

READER'S MAIL

BBMP should have done its homework

Sir, – This is in reference to your story on flaws found at several Namma Clinics that have been recently opened in Bengaluru. The BBMP should have done its homework to ensure that its systems are well integrated. Also, the authorities should make sure there is no duplication of functions between a Namma Clinic and an existing or upcoming PHC.
Only when the clinics are equipped with qualified and trained personnel, testing facilities, and all required medicines would they see an increase in footfall. To popularise them, it is important that proper signage leading to their location is displayed at key road intersections.

Kamal Laddha,
Bengaluru

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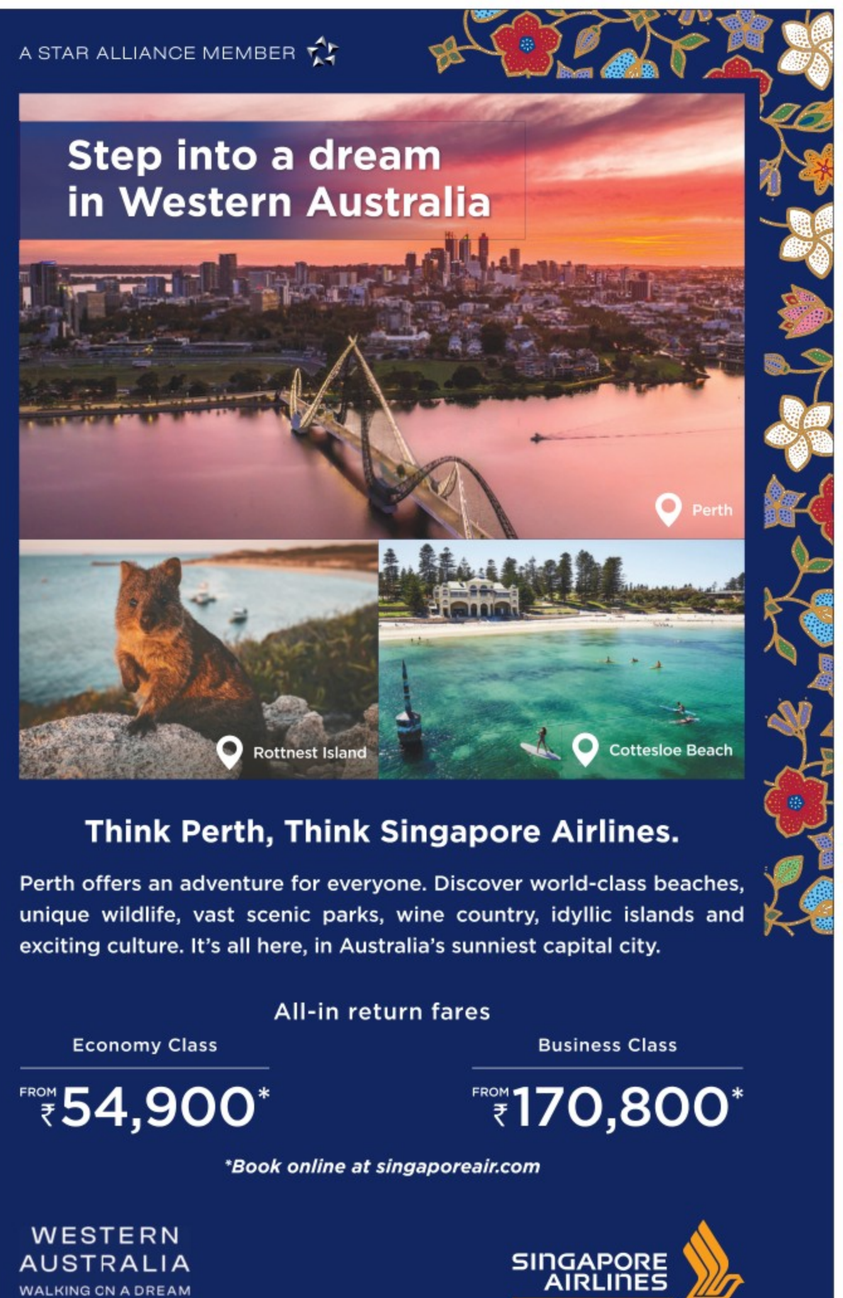

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Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act).
RNI No. KARENG/1970/49945 • ISSN 0971 - 751X

INBRIEF

HDK to interact with party workers via phone today

In what has been claimed as a first experiment in politics, former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy will speak to about one lakh party workers in a phone-in programme on Monday. He told reporters here on Monday that he will directly interact with booth-level workers since he is unable to meet everyone in person.

Congress and JD(S) include leaders from rival camps

As the elections come close, some political workers are changing parties. On Sunday, former legislator and BJP leader Veerabhadrappa Halaravi, former MLC and Congress leader S.K. Ghotnekar, and former vice-president of Kolar Zilla Panchayat Vadaguru Harish Gowda joined the JD(S). Meanwhile, BJP leader from Chikkamagaluru H.D. Thammaiah joined Congress on Sunday.

Two senior women bureaucrats lock horns over social media posts

Roopa accuses Rohini Sindhuri of corruption; the latter terms the allegations as baseless and made on personal hatred

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

IPS officer D. Roopa and (right) IAS officer Rohini Sindhuri.

Causing a flutter in the State bureaucracy, two senior women bureaucrats indulged in a public quarrel on social media on Sunday. A woman IPS officer took to social media to accuse a woman IAS officer of several wrongdoings. She also released the woman IAS officer's personal pictures allegedly shared with a few male officers.

In two long posts, Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation Managing Director D. Roopa, an IPS officer, made personal remarks against Muzrai Department Commissioner Rohini Sindhuri and accused her of corruption, among others.

However, Ms. Sindhuri termed the allegations as baseless that were made on personal hatred. She said that Ms. Roopa, who holds a responsible position, was behaving as if she had lost her mental balance. Both accused the other of violating the Civil Services Conduct rules, and that they had brought the respective violations to the notice of the appropriate authorities.

Incidentally, this is not the first time that the two are involved in mudslinging, as in the past Ms. Roopa had attacked Ms. Sindhuri. Also, individually, the two officials have landed in controversies in their official capacities over the last few years.

Ms. Roopa's posts, in which she attached personal photographs of Ms. Sindhuri, seems to have come after a photo of Ms. Sindhuri meeting K.R. Nagar MLA Sa. Ra. Mahesh allegedly to patch up with him went viral.

Incidentally, Ms. Sindhuri as Mysuru Deputy Commissioner had made allegations of land-grab against the legislator, who has filed a defamation case against the officer. However, many social media users questioned the posting of personal photographs on social media and also making accusations instead of reporting it to the appropriate authority.

Questioning the meeting of Ms. Sindhuri with Mr. Mahesh, the IPS officer asked why was there a compromise meeting between the two when the officer had taken decisions in official capacity. She accused Ms. Sindhuri of wrongdoing during her postings in Mandya, Hassan, and Mysuru districts, and her previous alleged squabbles with her colleagues.

In response, Ms. Sindhuri accused Ms. Roopa of driving false and personal vilification campaign against her. She said: "The photos are screenshots and picked from social media posts/ WhatsApp status and used to scandalise me." Further, she said: "It is her (Ms. Roopa) standard modus operandi. She has done it in every place she has worked. She has always craved for media attention. I will take legal and other actions with appropriate authorities for her actions amounting to misconduct and criminal offences under various sections of IPC."

Meanwhile, sources in the Chief Minister's office said that Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai is likely to intervene and ask the two officials to refrain from making any comments in public.

One more arrested in PSI exam scam

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Saturday arrested Vijaykumar Hebbalkar, assistant professor at Government First Grade College, for providing a Bluetooth device to a candidate appearing for the recruitment examination for the post of Police Sub-Inspector, held in October 2021.

During interrogation, Mr. Hebbalkar confessed that on the directions of Rudragowda Patil, main accused in the PSI exam scam, he had placed a Bluetooth device under the bench of a candidate named Supriya. Supriya passed the exam and had made it to the selection list.

The accused has been sent to judicial custody. Mr. Hebbalkar was appointed as assistant professor at a government first grade college after completing his Master's degree in Gulbarga University.

From Page One

ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 completes crucial test

"This test is a major milestone in the realisation of the satellites," the space agency said.

Chandrayaan-3 lander inside the anechoic chamber.

Chandrayaan-3 interplanetary mission has three major modules: the Propulsion module, Lander module, and Rover. The mission's complexity calls for establishing radio-frequency (RF) communication links between the modules.

"During the Chandrayaan-3 lander EMI/EC test, Launcher compatibility, Antenna Polarization of all RF systems, Standalone auto compatibility tests for orbital and powered descent mission phases, and Lander & Rover compatibility tests for post landing mission phase were ensured. The performance of the systems was satisfactory," ISRO added.

Chandrayaan-3 is India's third moon mission and is a follow-on mission to Chandrayaan-2 to demonstrate end-to-end capability in safe landing and roving on the lunar surface.

Get set, go

A participant at the State-level bullock cart race at Nettekerehalli near Chikkamagaluru on Sunday. PTI

'Cong. should set its house in order'

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has asked the Congress to set its own house in order before talking about the Bharatiya Janata Party.

"Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala should know that all is not well in Karnataka Congress. He should end the infighting in his own party before talking about the BJP," he said in Hubballi on Sunday.

"What does Mr. Surjewala know about Karnataka to talk about its politics or governance? Congress was defeated in the last elections only because it was an anti-people government. Now, the Congress is raising irrelevant issues, rather than functioning as a responsible Opposition," he said.

He was responding to Mr. Surjewala's comment that the BJP government had created a hell for the people of Karnataka.

Reacting to Mr. Surjewala's accusation that the BJP was copying some welfare and development programmes of the Congress, Mr. Bommai said the reverse was true. "It is the Congress that is copying our programmes. It is renaming our schemes like Gruhini Shakti and including them in their manifesto," he said.

He claimed that his Budget speech was not a mere rhetoric, but a record of concrete achievements. After the 2022 Budget, we set up a panel to oversee its implementation. The same committee will continue its job this year too, he said.

Electronic surveillance likely at Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The Karnataka Forest Department has plans to install e-eye cameras to strengthen vigilance and surveillance in the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary.

This follows the intrusion of a gang of poachers from Govindapadi village in Tamil Nadu who crossed the Cauvery river and allegedly poached a spotted deer recently. One of the suspected poachers was subsequently found dead in the river.

This system will facilitate 360 degree tracking of animals and humans, besides recording any movement and alerting authorities even at night

Nandesh, Deputy Conservator of Forests of Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, said they will write to the government for the new electronic surveillance system that will have multiple camera units and are GPS enabled and will facilitate 360 degree tracking of animals and humans, besides recording any movement and alerting the authorities even at night.

Commenting on the recent developments, Mr. Nandesh said the gang was intercepted by the Forest Department personnel on patrol duty a little past midnight on Wednesday.

On being confronted, the gang members brandished their arms forcing the forest guards to open fire in the air. He said the gang fled from the spot after leaving behind their arms and the carcass of the poached deer, all of which were seized.

But a body was retrieved from the river on Friday and he was identified as Raja, who was one of the suspected poachers who had gone missing.

Habitual offender

Malathi Priya, Chief Conservator of Forests, Mysuru Circle and holding additional charge a CCF, Chamarajanagar, said Raja was a habitual offender and there were poaching cases registered against him in Karnataka.

She said though there were allegations that Raja was shot by the forest guards, post-mortem report indicated that he had drowned. M.M. Hills police in Chamarajanagar have registered a case.

Mr. Nandesh said a portion of the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary bordering Tamil Nadu was porous and hence it was easier for small-time hunters to cross the Cauvery when the breadth of the river decreases from early February onwards. Hence electronic surveillance will help in strengthening vigil and prevent the recurrence of such incidents, he added.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

A show of strength and a counter

The recent exodus of local leaders from Janata Dal (Secular) to Congress at Chamundeshwari constituency in Mysuru was described as a "blow" to G.T. Deve Gowda, the incumbent MLA.

The public rally in which the JD(S) leaders switched their allegiance to the Congress, was attended by thousands of people and the Congress speakers "dared" Mr. Deve Gowda to hold a similar rally in the constituency "to prove his mettle."

Not to be cowed down, Mr. Deve Gowda responded with a rally that not only matched the Congress event in scale and size, but took the challenge a step further. The bike and bullock cart rally to the venue of the public meeting commenced from the very village of the local leaders who had quit the JD(S). As bikes and bullock carts emerged in waves from the village - Mavinahalli - the JD(S) took to social media and gloated that migration of the leaders to Congress did not matter as people of the village were still with Mr. Deve Gowda. Stumped by the response, Congress workers hit back saying "rented crowd" does not matter and people were still with them. As the elections draw near, expect the campaigning in Chamundeshwari to heat up further.

'Favourite city' gets raw deal

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, on his maiden visit to Hubballi after assuming office, was all praise for the city he grew up in. He called it his "favourite city" and promised he would do everything for it. But this was not reflected in the Budget he presented on Friday, with hardly anything for the city. His home district of Haveri and his constituency Shiggaon were better off. Promise of upgradation of a polytechnic college at Bankapura in Shiggaon taluk to an engineering college, a new mother-and-child hospital in Savanur of Haveri district are among a handful of promises for the district. But with election code of conduct sure to set in before the Budget can even begin to be implemented, what all these promises really mean is a moot question.

Unrepentant leader

Congress leaders had complained against Ramesh Jarkiholi after he promised to pay ₹6,000 to voters in a speech a few weeks ago. He had alleged that Congress MLA Lakshmi Hebbalkar was "bribing" her voters with gifts worth around ₹3,000. "You don't have to come to us if we don't pay ₹6,000," he had said in a public meeting in Belagavi Rural constituency, represented by Ms. Hebbalkar. Following the uproar, the BJP leader said that he only meant "per capita development funds" we will allocate to the constituency, and not bribe.

But he repeated the promise of money to voters at a party rally in Hire Bagewadi village two days ago. "The rural MLA is distributing money and gifts to voters. Whatever she gives, we will give twice the amount," he said. He gave a call to his supporters to defeat "her" at any cost, adding that he did not want to name anyone lest Congress kicks up another furore.

R. Krishna Kumar
Girish Pattanashetti
Rishikesh Bahadur Desai

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform General public that my client Mr. V.BHUPESH GUPTA S/o. Late. VISWANATH K.R. Aadhaar No.9843 6237 4755 Mobile No. 9448465644 residing at # 307, Near 8th cross, Sampige road malleswaram Bangalore-560 003 intends to purchase the schedule property from Smt.SHYLA SRIDHARA W/o. Late. Sridhar R. D/o. Dr. K. PARTHASARTHY residing at no. 14/3, 17th Cross, Malleswaram, Bangalore-560055.

The said Schedule property acquired by Smt. SHYLA SRIDHAR Aadhaar No. 5323 4514 0930. under the DEED OF GIFT DT. 11.09.2009 from Her sister Smt. BHARATHI SRINIVASAN the said regd. as document BOOK No.1, No. MLS-1-00582 -2009-10 in CD.No. MLSD12 Dt. 11.09.2009 in the office of the Sub-registerar Malleswaram Bangalore.

Apart from the said owner, ANY person/s claiming to have any charge, any rights title, estate or interest, claim, by way of inheritance share, sale mortgage, guarantee, attachment, transfer, assignment, lease, lien, interest, minor claims, partition rights, lis-pendens charge, trust, gift, possession or encumbrance, beneficial interest, decree or orders of any court of law, contracts, or otherwise however, into or upon the said schedule property or any part or portion thereof, or against the owner/s or against the documents, whatsoever over the schedule property may lodge their claim to the undersigned with documentary proof which they are basing claim within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which my client will treat that there are no objections or claims in respect of the schedule property, No claims shall be entertained thereafter.

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ALL that piece and parcel of the property bearing No. 14/3, PID No. 7-35-14/3, 17th cross, Malleswaram, Bangalore measuring East to west: 31'.6" feet, North to south; 54 feet. (31'.6" X 54 feet) totally 1706.58 sq. feet.Bounded on : East: Road, West: property of Smt. Sampath kumar bearing no. 14/1,. North by: 17th Cross Road & South by: Property No. 14, belonging to smt. Srilatha Vijayakumar

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Bid enquiry No:KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-1/2021-22/EPR-18/CALL-16 Dated 28.12.2021 for the work of replacement of deteriorated tower type DA+0 at 66KV Tower No.71 in the existing 66/11KV DG3-DG4 DC line from existing 66/11KV Manyatha Tech Park S/s., to existing 66/11KV Hoskote S/s near Hirandahalli lake limits, Bangaluru rural.

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through e-Procurement mode only)

2. No.:SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/F-122(27)/22-23/13485-86 Date: 17.02.2023

Bid enquiry No:KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/22-23/EPR-44/CALL-5 Dated 21.10.2022 for the work of Dismantling, Transportation (to and fro), Repair, Testing, Erection and commissioning of sick Power Transformer of rating 31.5 MVA , 66/11KV, Victory make, Sl. No.4-0012/5 year of manufacture 2009 Lying at 66/11kV Prestige Shanthiniketan Sub-station on total turnkey basis.

3. No.:SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/F-EPR-57/22-23/13490-91 Date: 17.02.2023

Bid enquiry No:KPTCL/SEE/Tr(M)/BMAZ(S)/EE(O)/AEE-4/22-23/EPR-57/CALL-02 Dated 02.01.2023 for the work of "Replacement of age old, Pneumatic type 31.5kA, 66kV SF6 breakers by spring mechanism type 40/50kA breakers at 220/66/11kV station, Somanahalli in TL&SS Division, Somanahalli pertains to BMAZ South Circle, Bengaluru on Total Turn Key Basis including supply of all matching materials/equipment's including 66kV Breakers and Conductors and erection (including civil works) of all materials/equipment's testing and commissioning".

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Usha Devi
W/o. Seenivasan
7,Commanding Officer II Lane, West Masi Street, Madurai.
...Plaintiff
- Vs -
Immanuvel Jebakumar Thomas, S/o. Thompson Selvaraj, 26 Railway Colony, RMV II Stage
New Bell Road, Bangalore.
...6th Defendant

Whereas the above named plaintiff has instiute the above suit for declaration and injuction against you as the 6th Defendant. You the 6th Defendant are hereby summom to appear in the court in person on the **9th Day of March 2023 at 10.30AM.** Take notice that in default of you apperance on that day the suit will be heard and determined in you absence.

I.K.Subramanian B.Sc., B.L., 75, Perumal Kovil Street, Tenkasi.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

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Ex. GM Lord Krishna Bank
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Mobile: 95000 73703

Telangana's Teja chilli is hot property in many nations

P. Sridhar
KHAMMAM

The burgeoning demand for the popular Teja variety of red chilli, famous for its culinary, medicinal and other wide-ranging uses, in the export market is proving to be a boon for the Khammam Agriculture Market, housing Telangana's second largest chilli market yard, in the district headquarters town of Khammam.

In dire need: The huge demand for oleoresin is mainly driving the export of Teja variety of red chilli from Khammam. G.N. RAO

Khammam district, the largest producer of the Teja variety of red chilli, is the leading exporter of the pungent produce, which is known not only for its culinary purpose to spice up various delicacies but also as a main ingredient in making pepper spray. The huge demand for oleoresin, a natural chilli extract, is mainly driving the export of the Teja variety of red chilli from Khammam district to various spice processing industries in several Asian countries.

The Mudigonda-based oleoresin extraction firm of a Chinese company is engaged in export of the byproduct to its clients, sources said.

The Teja variety of red chilli is being exported to China, Bangladesh and a few other south Asian countries from Khammam mainly through the Chennai port.

The volume of exports of the commodity is picking up in tune with growing requirements of the spice processing industries and other allied units engaged in production of value-added products such as sauce and pickles.

The paste extracted from the pungent fruit is also in demand for its use as a protective layer beneath ships in some of the Asian countries, sources added.

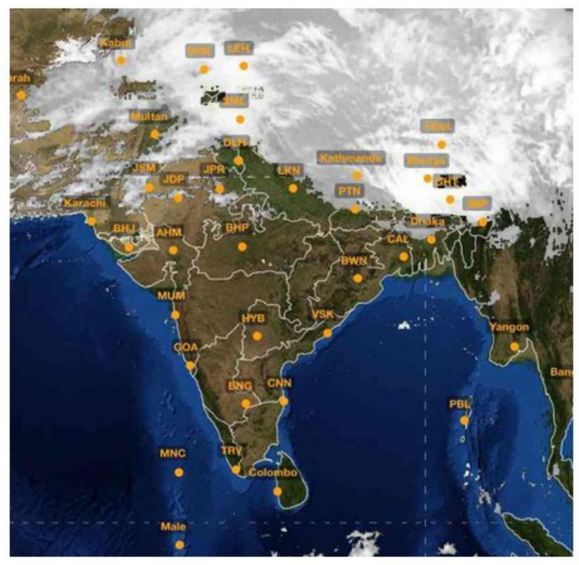
The export of Teja variety of red chilli is expected to grow from the present ₹2,000 crore per annum to ₹2,500 crore next year, Khammam Agriculture Market Secretary R. Mallesham told *The Hindu*.

He said: "A major chunk of the commodity is being exported to China. The pungent fruit is most sought after in various south Asian countries including Thailand."

Despite the huge demand for Teja red chilli in the international market, "we are finding it difficult to recover the investment due to sharp escalation of cultivation cost," rued K. Srinivas, a chilli farmer of Tirumalayapalem. Only big traders, those who can afford to keep huge stocks in cold storages for longer duration are reaping rich dividends of the huge export potential of the commodity, alleged another chilli grower.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit, Baltistan, Muzaffarabad and Himachal Pradesh. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over Kutch and Konkan.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	29.7	17.0	Kozhikode	—	34.8	24.2
Ahmedabad	—	—	15.5	Kurnool	—	35.4	21.0
Aizawl	—	—	10.5	Lucknow	—	29.0	15.0
Allahabad	—	31.5	14.0	Madurai	—	34.6	22.0
Bengaluru	—	31.6	17.2	Mangaluru	—	31.9	22.8
Bhopal	—	—	13.4	Mumbai	—	34.2	21.4
Bhubaneswar	—	30.2	20.0	Mysuru	—	33.2	14.2
Chandigarh	—	27.9	14.2	New Delhi	—	30.7	15.0
Chennai	—	31.2	23.2	Patna	—	—	14.6
Coimbatore	—	33.4	21.0	Port Blair	—	31.0	23.1
Dehradun	—	28.5	12.3	Puducherry	—	32.6	20.5
Gangtok	—	17.4	12.1	Pune	—	34.8	15.5
Goa	—	32.5	22.5	Raipur	—	32.5	14.6
Guwahati	—	30.6	15.5	Ranchi	—	30.2	15.2
Hubballi	—	34.0	18.0	Shillong	—	18.8	9.5
Hyderabad	—	32.0	19.6	Shimla	—	23.2	14.0
Imphal	—	28.3	11.2	Srinagar	—	15.1	6.7
Jaipur	—	—	14.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.0	21.6
Kochi	—	31.8	23.8	Tiruchi	—	33.3	22.0
Kohima	—	21.0	8.4	Vijayawada	—	32.7	21.8
Kolkata	—	29.4	20.7	Visakhapatnam	—	31.0	25.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.06	.11	.39	250	175	
Bengaluru	.04	.26	.15	500	—	
Chennai	.20	.22	.40	142	113	
Delhi	.07	203	.78	398	317	
Hyderabad	.05	.51	.34	122	140	
Kolkata	.34	.22	.33	96	102	
Lucknow	.11	.66	.69	265	195	
Mumbai	.22	.54	124	314	190	
Pune	.91	116	113	211	128	
Visakhapatnam	.06	.37	.72	62	104	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 383 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Nandesari, Gujarat recorded a healthy AQI score of 26

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Actor Taraka Ratna had a passion for politics, says Naidu

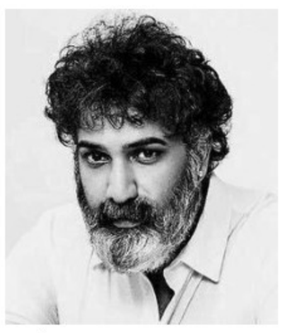
The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Film actor Taraka Ratna, who passed away on Saturday, had a desire to contest in the next elections but his wish will remain unfulfilled.

This was revealed by his uncle and former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu when he visited the residence of the actor.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Mr. Naidu said that Taraka Ratna had a passion for politics and keenly followed political developments.

Mr. Naidu's bitter political critic and Rajya Sabha member of the YSRCP Vijaysai Reddy was right beside him when he revealed the late actor's desire.



Taraka Ratna

Mr. Reddy is a close relative of Taraka Ratna's wife Alekya Reddy.

Earlier, Mr. Naidu and Mr. Reddy were involved in a long conversation. When Mr. Naidu decided to speak to the media, Mr. Reddy also accompanied and stood beside him surprising everyone, given the political bitterness between them.

Air India Express flight makes emergency landing in Kerala

Flight IX 540, with 156 on board, developed a technical snag in its nose wheel; all passengers were safe and no flights had to be diverted because of the emergency landing, airport sources say

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A full emergency was declared at the international airport here on Sunday after an Air India Express flight from Dubai to Thiruvananthapuram made a safe emergency landing by 5.40 a.m.

Flight IX 540, with 156 persons on board, including crew, had developed a technical snag in its nose wheel.

According to airport sources, the pilot of the aircraft requested the air traffic control unit to make arrangements for an emergency landing after noticing the "tread of the tyre fitted to the nose wheel coming off in some areas."

The nose wheel of the aircraft which made an emergency landing on Sunday.

The airport authorities responded swiftly by taking emergency measures. Nearly 10 ambulances were called in from neighbouring areas as a precautionary measure.

Aircraft towed away

The runway was cleared and the plane reportedly made a safe landing. The aircraft was later towed away to the parking bay after all the passengers disembarked.

All passengers were safe during the landing and no flights were diverted because of the emergency landing, airport sources said.

Soon after the landing, the emergency was withdrawn and air operations were declared normal. The aviation watchdog, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), will hold an investigation into the incident.

There was no immediate comment from Air India Express on the incident.

Same day in 2021

A Boeing 737 aircraft of Air India Express with 104 passengers onboard made an emergency landing at the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport on the same day in 2021 after it developed hydraulic failure while on its way from Sharjah to the Calicut International Airport in Malappuram.

THE HINDU

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Why reading matters

Prof. K. Elango, the general secretary of the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI), explains why the organisation has launched a country-wide movement to promote reading

Albert P' Rayan

About a decade ago, when visiting book stores in Bengaluru and Chennai, I used to see many young people enthusiastically reading their favourite books in the children's section. Rarely do I see children in book stores now. My fellow educators often ask if reading ceased to be a hobby of young students and whether the present generation realises the importance of reading. Others raise quite different questions: Does reading really matter? Is it necessary to promote reading? In this context, it is interesting that Dr. K. Elango, general secretary, English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI) and his team have launched the India Reads movement to promote reading in educational institutions. Excerpts from an interview:

As the brain behind the India Reads movement, could you tell us about the need for it?

The culture of reading is on the decline among all age groups, especially among the e-generation. This cognitive crisis must be halted. The movement's primary aim is to promote book reading. In cases of inaccessibility, e-reading can be resorted to. The ELTAI believes that "reading is the mother of all skills" and that its loss would lead to the loss of all skills.

What are the objectives of India Reads?

The ELTAI embraces the idea that "reading is caught, not taught", and aims to inspire a love of reading through a learner-led programme. The organisation believes that when one person reads, their friends and peers are more likely to read as well, creating a ripple effect of peer influence that is more powerful than that of teachers and parents.

In order to promote reading for pleasure, the programme focuses on familiarising students with a variety of text genres and reading strategies.

Rather than relying on academic textbooks, the programme aims to encourage students to read a wide variety of texts. It also encourages bilingual reading, as it has been shown that reading skills are transferable across languages.

Who are the people who constitute the India Reads movement?

The organisation is attempting to make reading a community-wide movement involving teachers, students, celebrities, writers, social and mass media, corporates, NGOs, and others to impact the young minds, and bring about a transformative ecosystem for reading.

With increasing reliance on digital media, some may question the importance of reading in the 21st century. Does reading still matter when many young people believe they can understand the world and their society better through "viewing" than "reading"? Is "reading" still a felt need for today's generation?

In India, the education ecosystem is different from that of the developed countries. It is important not to blindly adopt Western models without considering our learners' specific needs. Despite the decline of print media in many parts of the world, it continues to thrive in India, indicating a strong reading culture that should be nurtured and encouraged. It is important to remember that shallow viewing can never replace deep, immersive reading. Reading is not necessarily a "felt need" for today's generation, but it is essential for their future. Therefore, efforts should be made to encourage and persuade young people to appreciate its value.

How does the ELTAI plan to promote reading?

A key initiative is the development of a 100-hour module to engage students in hands-on reading experiences. In addition, ELTAI is working to establish classroom libraries managed by the students themselves to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility. This is a move away from the traditional setup in which libraries are in separate rooms or buildings. Instead, books are made visible and accessible to the students by keeping them in classrooms. ELTAI is also setting up a Learning Management System (LMS) to make reading materials available and scaffolded by a dedicated team.

Renowned second-language acquisition theorist, Stephen Krashen, stated that much of our language development comes from self-selected reading for pleasure and that, in order to truly benefit from the power of reading, readers need access to reading materials that they find both comprehensible and interesting. Do schools in India give importance to 'reading for pleasure'?

While I agree with Krashen, in the Indian educational context, the emphasis is mostly on "reading for scores" and reading as a "torturous act" rather than or pleasure. The reality is that if students were to become committed readers, they would be able to read and understand their English textbook in a single day, as opposed to spending an entire academic year on it. This is not only a waste of cognitive but also energy and other resources.

Teachers who read can lead students to read. Do we have such "reading teachers" in our educational institutions? Does the ELTAI think that it is important to train teachers first and enable them to nurture pleasure reading in students?

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO AND THULASI KAKKAT

The traditional model is to train teachers and through them reach students. This has not yielded desired results.

As an alternative, ELTAI believes in directly reaching out to students, with the guidance of "reading teachers", regardless of the subject or discipline they belong to. The 'teacherish' aspect is to be avoided for fear of being too prescriptive. The goal is to create a learning and development programme rather than just another English course.

Do you think social media can be used to promote reading? Does India Reads have any such plan?

Yes, social media is a useful platform. Some research studies have found that platforms such as Facebook groups can be used to discuss books, share information, formulate opinions, and so on. India Reads has both FB and Insta groups.

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Battle for the Sena

The Thackerays are ceding ground to the Shinde faction

The faction of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has, at least for now, won the battle for the Shiv Sena legacy, with the Election Commission of India (ECI) allotting the party name and the bow and arrow symbol to it. The ECI overruled the plea by the other faction led by former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to withhold the decision until the Supreme Court of India decides on a set of interlinked questions related to the split in the party, that led to Mr. Thackeray losing the CM's chair to Mr. Shinde in June 2022. 'The 'test of majority' principle applied by the ECI went in favour of the Shinde group which has 40 MLAs and 13 MPs, compared to the 15 MLAs and five MPs on the Thackeray side. The Shinde group represented significantly more voters than the Thackeray faction, among those who voted for the party in the last elections, the ECI concluded. The ECI decided not to go into the 'test of party constitution', a second touchstone applicable in such situations, in an indictment of Mr. Thackeray, who made changes to the Sena constitution unilaterally and self-servingly. The ECI decision is a setback to Mr. Thackeray who is struggling hard to retain control of the party founded by his father in 1966.

The Court is scheduled to start hearing on petitions by both camps that claim to be the real Shiv Sena, from February 21 onwards. Whichever faction is accepted to be the real Shiv Sena would have the authority to coerce legislators through whips, as in provisions of the anti-defection law. The Shinde faction argues that the Chief Minister took control of the party following an internal rebellion, and as per majority desire; and nobody has defected, as is being accused by the Thackeray faction. The Court is also examining whether a presiding officer, whose legitimacy is itself under a cloud, could go on to determine the disqualification of legislators under the anti-defection law. Considering that these questions will be argued in the highest court in the coming week, the ECI could have waited. It is not likely that the ECI's decision on the name and the symbol will also be raised in court. This legal tussle apart, the real combat between the two factions is for the popular base. On this count too Mr. Thackeray appears to have ceded ground to Mr. Shinde who is expanding his hold over cadres and networks. Evidently, Mr. Shinde's political alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party is more palatable to party workers, who have been fed on high doses of religious extremism and regional fanaticism over the years, than Mr. Thackeray's opportunistic experiments with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party.

Aldermen altercation

By barring L-G's nominees from voting, top court has scuttled mischief in Delhi

The Supreme Court has rightly shot down the brazen and legally untenable claim that nominated members of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) may be allowed to vote in the election of its Mayor. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) sought to bend the rules to allow the 10 aldermen, nominated by the Lieutenant-Governor, to vote in the election, despite the law limiting the process to elected Councillors. That a question concerning a mayoral election should engage national attention is due to the political acrimony between the ruling BJP at the Centre and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which runs the elected regime in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The BJP sought to interpret the relevant provisions in the Constitution and the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act in such a way that the specific bar on nominated members voting in "meetings" of the corporation should not be applied to its first meeting, at which the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected. It takes a particularly perverse political imagination to argue that "meetings" do not include the "first meeting". Three attempts to hold the mayoral election, following the MCD polls that took place in December 2022, were stalled by clashes between AAP and BJP councillors over this question. The verdict vindicates the position of AAP, which has 134 councillors in the 250-member Council, against the BJP's 104.

It is unfortunate that before the Court, the Lt. Governor also took the questionable political stand that the restriction on the right to vote in Article 243R(2) of the Constitution and the proviso to Section 3(3)(b)(i) of the Act was limited to regular meetings, and not to the first meeting of the Council. The Court rejected the argument, noting that the law provides for the nomination of 10 people "with special knowledge and experience in municipal administration", but without any voting right. In keeping with the Court's order, Lt. Governor V.K. Saxena has now approved February 22 as the date for the election of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and six members of the Standing Committee. Last year, Parliament passed a law to merge the three corporations in Delhi into a single entity, a decision criticised for reversing the trend of having compact local bodies for better delivery of civic services. Delhi's lack of statehood is a source of conflict between the Centre and the elected regime in the capital territory, but the political protagonists should not allow Delhi's administrative structures to be plagued by the tussle. The core message from a Constitution Bench judgment of 2018, that elected bodies should not be undermined by unelected administrators, is yet to hit home.

The curious case of the disqualification of a politician

M.R. Madhavan

is President of PRS Legislative Research, New Delhi

The instance where the Kerala High Court, in January this year, suspended the verdict passed by the Kavaratti District and Sessions Court (in an attempt to murder case) in which the then sitting Member of Parliament (MP) of Lakshadweep and Nationalist Congress Party leader Mohammed Faizal P.P. was sentenced to 10 years in jail, has raised an interesting question on his disqualification. The issue is on whether disqualification for conviction is final or whether it can be revoked. This issue can arise whenever a legislator is disqualified. This is not very rare – Samajwadi Party Member of the Assembly Abdullah Azam Khan was disqualified from the Uttar Pradesh legislature just a week ago.

The background

The facts are as follows. Mr. Faizal was convicted by the Kavaratti sessions court on January 11 for attempt to murder, and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. On January 13, the Lok Sabha announced that he was disqualified as an MP with effect from the date of conviction. On January 18, the Election Commission of India (ECI) fixed February 27 as the date for by-election to that constituency, with the formal notification to be issued on January 31. Mr. Faizal appealed to the Kerala High Court for a stay on his conviction and sentence, which the High Court suspended on January 25.

The High Court said that the consequence of not suspending the conviction is drastic not just for Mr. Faizal but also for the nation. The cost of a parliamentary election would have to be borne by the nation and developmental activities in Lakshadweep will also stop for a few weeks. The elected candidate will have just 15 months to function till the end of the term of the current Lok Sabha. Given these exceptional and irreversible consequences, it suspended his conviction until disposal of the appeal.

Mr. Faizal challenged the ECI's announcement in the Supreme Court of India. On January 30, the ECI said it was deferring the election.

The question now is whether Mr. Faizal will automatically resume his membership of the Lok Sabha. The answer lies in deciding whether the cancellation of disqualification takes effect from January 25 (when the High Court suspended the conviction) or whether the clock can be rolled back to the date of conviction and disqualification.

The issue in the case of politician Mohammed Faizal P.P. is this — is his disqualification for conviction final? Or can it be revoked?

The specific provisions

The provision for disqualification is given in Article 102 of the Constitution. It specifies that a person shall be disqualified for contesting elections and being a Member of Parliament under certain conditions. These include holding an office of profit, being of unsound mind or insolvent, or not being a citizen of India. It also authorises Parliament to make law determining conditions of disqualifications. There are analogous provisions for members of state legislatures.

The Representation of the People Act, 1951 provides that a person will be disqualified if convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for two years or more. The person is disqualified for the period of imprisonment and a further six years. There is an exception for sitting members; they have been provided a period of three months from the date of conviction to appeal; the disqualification will not be applicable until the appeal is decided. The differential treatment of candidates for elections and sitting members was challenged under Article 14 (right to equality). A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in 2005 (*K. Prabhakaran vs P. Jayarajan*), decided that the consequences of disqualifying a contestant and a sitting member were different. In the latter case, the strength of the party in the legislature would change, and could have an adverse impact if a government had a thin majority. It would also trigger a by-election. Therefore, it was reasonable to treat the two categories differently. The Court also considered whether in case of a disqualified candidate who is later acquitted, the disqualification would be removed with retrospective effect. It stated that this could not be done as this would require the results of the election to be cancelled. Therefore, the removal of disqualification would be prospective and for future elections.

In 2013, a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court again considered whether this exception was constitutionally invalid (*Lily Thomas vs Union of India*). It stated that Article 102 empowers Parliament to make law regarding disqualification of a person "for being chosen as, and for being, a member of either House of Parliament".

It interpreted this phrase to mean that whereas Parliament could specify conditions for disqualification, those conditions would apply equally to candidates and sitting members. Therefore, the exception carved out for sitting members was unconstitutional. The judgment further cited Article 101 that if a Member of Parliament was disqualified under Article 102, "his seat shall thereupon become vacant". Therefore, the disqualification was automatic and had immediate effect if the conditions of Article 102 were met.

The implications

So what happens if the conviction is suspended? Navjot Singh Sidhu was convicted and sentenced to three years imprisonment when he was an MP. He resigned his seat but wanted to contest the election, and appealed for a stay on his conviction. The Supreme Court stayed his conviction in 2007, which removed the disqualification until the appeal was decided. This decision allowed him to contest the election.

This issue was also discussed in the Lily Thomas judgment (2013). The judgment stated that a disqualified person may obtain a stay on his conviction, and cited an earlier 2007 judgment that the disqualification would be removed from the date of the stay order.

So what happens now? The Lakshadweep seat was declared vacant but the ECI, after the stay order, announced deferring the by-election. The Lok Sabha has kept the seat vacant and has not yet re-instated the MP. The reason the High Court granted the stay was to avoid an expensive election. The question is whether the removal of disqualification can be back dated as if it never happened and the election avoided. Or whether the disqualification is removed only from the date of the stay order, and, therefore, the vacated seat be filled only through a by-election. This conundrum arises because the Lily Thomas judgment requires the seat to be vacated immediately upon disqualification whereas the Kerala High Court stay tries to ensure that the MP retains the seat until the appeal is decided. The answer will also have implications for similar cases in the future.

A picture of Islam that is quite different

Ziya Us Salam

Towards the end of 2022, a hugely significant moment in the post-Independence history of Indian Muslims slipped by under the radar. The Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, the oldest Muslim organisation in India, with its roots in the national freedom struggle, filed a petition in the Supreme Court of India seeking reservation for Dalit Muslims for admission to schools, colleges and government jobs. In a country where demands are periodically made for reservations on the lines of caste or region, not many comprehended the significance of this demand. It was the first time ever that a Muslim body in India was explicitly admitting to the presence of caste system among Indian Muslims – Islam, in essence, is a casteless faith with an emphasis on egalitarianism.

The same is not necessarily true of Indian Islam; yet, this was the first time that a Muslim body made bold to embrace social reality and seek reservations on the lines of caste; Islam and caste did not seem to be an anomaly any more. It was another step towards Indianisation of the religion, and quite contrary to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad who, in his last sermon, emphasised the equality of the human race reminding the faithful, "An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, a White over Black and vice-versa". Yet, here was the Jamiat tacitly admitting to the 'superior' status of ashrafs (Sheikhs, Syeds and Pathan, etc.) and explicitly seeking the benefit of affirmative action for lower caste Muslims (Ansaris, Saifis, Abbasis, etc.) so that they could climb the social ladder.

The action may have stemmed from the increased activity in socio-political circles around Pasmanda Muslims, but whichever way one looks at it, the Jamiat's petition was an undeniable acceptance of caste among Indian Muslims. Yes, caste among Muslims is not exploitative as in pockets of Hindu society – in early January there was a case of a Dalit man being tortured with burning logs for visiting a temple in Uttarakhand – but it is almost always present as a mark of identity, and even worn as a badge of honour in many circles. In the years gone by, in many towns of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, it was not unusual to see a poor cyclist, probably hailing from the so-called lower caste, alighting from his vehicle on seeing a Syed or Pathan coming by his bike or car from the opposite direction.

The Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind are presenting themselves in different ways as entities with a uniquely Indian identity

Whatever the top court's verdict, in the years to come, the Jamiat's petition is likely to play as important a role in the annals of post-Independence India as the acceptance of secular democracy by the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind.

A gradual change

The Jamaat was founded in 1941 by Abul Ala Mawdudi with the express purpose of ushering in a *hukumat-e-ilahiya* or the Islamic state. Mawdudi believed that the very promulgation of the *Kalima*, the first tenet of Islam, made it incumbent upon the believer to strive to establish an Islamic state or god's kingdom. He believed in striving for a transformation of India into a Darul Islam (land of faith), and was fundamentally opposed to secular democracy where all faiths were regarded as equal, and the law was made on non-religious lines. In fact, the early rules of the Jamaat made it essential for its members to oppose any legislative assemblies which made laws not derived from the Shariah. The pre-Independence Jamaat opposed a secular judiciary and an economic system based on *riba* or interest which is *haraam* (forbidden) in Islam. A person who gives and takes interest is said to be at war with god and his messenger. However, as Mawdudi shifted to Pakistan following India's independence, the Jamaat too turned a new leaf and gradually came to not only accept but also embrace secular polity. The change was gradual, well considered and a quiet acceptance of the new reality of the country post-Partition.

In 1961, the Jamaat sought the opinion of the *ulemma* on whether the faithful could participate in democratic elections, and then allowed its members to not only vote in general or State elections but also contest them, if they so wished. The Jamaat, in some pockets, went on to forge alliances with mainstream secular political parties, and often advised Muslims to vote for a particular candidate or party. After initial reservations within the organisation on the subject of voting or contesting elections which derived their rules from the Constitution of India, it was no longer considered against Islam to participate in a pluralist democracy.

Likewise, Muslims were first permitted, then encouraged to enter government services. In other words, the Jamaat accepted the laws of independent India and was happy to operate within the confines of secular polity principles framed by B.R. Ambedkar, and conducted financial transactions according to the law of the land. It meant Indianisation of Islam was accepted by the body and the goal of establishing *Hukumat-e-Ilahiya* set aside. The organisation which once limited its in-house discourses to commentaries on the *Koran* and *Hadith* now hosts public discussions on the Union Budget and contemporary events in secular society.

Intertwining of responsibilities

Likewise, before the 2019 general election which coincided with the month of Ramzan, the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind advised fasting Muslims to first cast their vote in the morning before retiring to their homes for rest and prayer. Responsibilities as an Indian and a Muslim were intertwined. It brought back the words of Hussain Ahmed Madani, a prominent Jamiat leader, who once told the faithful, "Our religion tells us Adam descended in India. It was from here that his race spread. It is necessary for the Muslims to understand that this country was their old native place." He could have well said this country and its social practices. Interestingly, at the just concluded three-day conclave of the Jamiat, Mahmood Madani made headlines for merely repeating Hussain Ahmed's words. He said, "India and not Arabia is the birthplace of Islam. The first prophet descended here. India belongs to all of us equally. It belongs as much to Narendra Modi and Mohan Bhagwat as Mahmood." A day later, his uncle Arshad Madani chipped in with his take on oneness of god, stating, "What Hindus worship as Om, Muslims worship as Allah."

Between them, the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, in their different ways, have managed to present a picture of Islam which is quite different from the Islam of Arabia, but a thriving entity with a uniquely Indian identity. It has room for caste identities, dialogue with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and claims on oneness of god, irrespective of differences in religion.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No to 'sealed cover'

The emphatic step taken by the Supreme Court of India to reject the government's attempt at "sealed cover" jurisprudence is not only a prudent decision but also a nod to transparency and fair play. The decision will be whole-heartedly welcomed by right-thinking citizens and investors. In the wake of the meltdown in the Adani Group stocks, the decision will go a long way in instilling much-needed confidence in investors. It is for the government to become not only an honest broker but also appear to be so in the whole process.

C.G. Kuriakose,
Kothamangalam, Kerala

The government's refusal to entertain any discussion on the Adani issue gave enough room for one to believe that the government was afraid of any exposure of the alleged fraudulent activities of the Adani group for reasons best known to it. This hunch was strengthened further when the government attempted the "sealed cover" move. In being swift to recognise that transparency will stand martyred, praise must be heaped on the Supreme Court for rejecting the offer and providing a sense of confidence to the public in the process. All aspects of the Hindenburg report must be examined dispassionately and the real truth brought to light.

Tharcius S. Fernando,
Chennai

Soros comment, reactions

While a woman Union Minister's outburst against George Soros for his critical comments on the Prime Minister, in the context of the Hindenburg Research report, is quite understandable, one expected a more nuanced reaction from the External Affairs Minister. Instead, the External Affairs Minister has betrayed his own lack of confidence in the robustness of India's democracy. The Prime Minister's complete silence, both within and outside, Parliament, and his government's refusal to even debate the issue only deepens the suspicion of the business group being shielded from the long arm of the law. Also, had the Supreme Court Bench headed by the then Chief Justice of India refused to accept "sealed cover" reports from the Union of India, the controversial Rafale deal might have been decided differently.

S.K. Choudhury,
Bengaluru

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name.

Why the caste survey in Bihar worries the BJP

Sanjay Kumar

is a Professor at CSDS. Views are personal

Vishakha Nandini

is a final year law student at the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun. She was associated with Lokniti-CSDS as an intern

Ever since Bihar began its caste count in January, questions have been raised on whether the exercise is being conducted only for political gains, given that the Lok Sabha elections are just 16 months away, or whether it will prove useful for the social and economic development of the Other Backward Classes (OBC). Some people have asked why this exercise is even needed in Bihar. Let us examine these questions.

The need for numbers

Whatever the motive of the Nitish Kumar government, is an undeniable fact that we need data. Without numbers, neither can political parties put forth their arguments for the need of certain policies or quotas convincingly, nor can the government effectively provide support through policies and programmes for specific communities. This is why a census is essential. It is the best way to count the number of people belonging to a community and determine their socioeconomic status (though this particular survey may not be officially called a census as the census can only be conducted by the Central government every 10 years).

Some people also wonder whether there is any logic in conducting this exercise when the Central government is averse to it. There is no harm – if nothing else, it will at least put to rest all the speculation about the share of OBCs in Bihar's total population. It is numbers that give concrete meaning to vague expressions or speculations. When someone says 'young' or 'old', they are not being specific. 'Young' could mean below 10 years or below 18 years and 'old' could mean above 60 years or above 80 years. Similarly, when the OBC population is described as 'very large', it leads to disputes about figures. The census is the only way of arriving at a reliable estimate.

The charge that the timing of the exercise indicates that it is politically motivated may not be true as Mr. Kumar has always supported a caste-based census. When this issue was being debated within the National Democratic Alliance, of which he was then a part, Mr. Kumar was the dissenting voice. He even urged the Central government to "reconsider" its position against the exercise.

While the first phase of the survey was completed in January and we will have to wait until May for the entire exercise to be completed, it cannot be denied that this survey will have political implications. By conducting this survey, the Janata Dal (United)-Rashtriya Janata Dal government has sent out a clear message that it is interested in addressing the social and economic backwardness of the OBCs. The two parties are sure to reap some electoral dividends from this, especially since both have sizeable support among OBC voters. Through this exercise, the RJD and the JD(U) have provided some hope to the OBCs that their plight can be improved. It would not be surprising if parties such as the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Biju Janata Dal, which are also splinter parties of the Janata Dal, initiate this process in their States if they are in power, or put pressure on their State government to conduct the census.

The BJP fears that there could be a resurgence of Mandal politics, but fails to understand that the BJP of today is different from the BJP of the 1990s

The BJP's opposition

The expected gains could have been minimised if the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had not vehemently opposed the caste census when the issue was debated. The BJP's opposition to this exercise has only led to doubts in the minds of a large section of OBCs. They do not understand why the BJP is so staunchly opposed to this exercise. This has led to speculation of whether the Central government wants to hide certain facts and numbers.

It is unclear why the BJP is opposed to the exercise given that is has made huge inroads into the OBC community, especially the lower OBC voter base, across the country. Evidence from surveys by Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies shows that the BJP got 44% of the OBC votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections compared to just 22% in 2009. The caste census initiated by the Central government would have only given positive signals to the OBC community.

Perhaps there are other compulsions. The BJP's central leaders feel that the demand for a caste census in the State is an attempt to revive Mandal politics. Mandal politics gained centrality in the mid-1990s, especially in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and brought about a fundamental change in OBC politics. There was a dramatic mobilisation of OBCs. The BJP then was struggling to build its own narrative until senior leader L.K. Advani launched his famous Rath Yatra to counter OBC mobilisation.

However, the BJP leadership needs to realise that the BJP of today is very different from the BJP of the 1990s. Today, even nine years after assuming power at the Centre, it has a much broader support base among all the communities, including the OBCs, compared to the past. Many OBCs have deserted parties like the SP and RJD and supported the BJP. A caste census by the Central government would not damage the nature of the BJP's support base significantly.

PTI

An effort to go green

Telangana government's green initiatives help create awareness about the environment

STATE OF PLAY

Serish Nanisetti
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Can urban growth and expansion of green cover take place at the same time? Can new roads be laid in old neighbourhoods without uprooting avenue trees and roadside gardens?

Plenty of examples can be cited from the country to argue that this is improbable. However, the Telangana government claims it is not. Over the past two years, Hyderabad, which has emerged as a powerhouse of infrastructure growth in Telangana, has won multiple awards for being a green city with an improving forest cover. Speaking on the floor of the Assembly last Monday while presenting the annual Budget, Finance Minister T. Harish Rao listed these awards and achievements.

The State government has provided impressive numbers of tree plantations to show the state of the forest. An afforestation programme called Telangana Ku Haritha Hāram (the green garland of Telangana) is the key green initiative of the Telangana government. With a funding of ₹10,417 crore over nine years, the programme has covered a vast area of land with trees and plants. The State government allocated ₹1,471 crore to the Forest Department and Haritha Haaram in 2023-24, and ₹198 crore for compensatory afforestation. According to Mr. Rao's budgetary speech last year, the government has replanted 9.65 lakh acres and developed 109 urban forests. This year, 13 lakh acres of forest have been "rejuvenated" with a funding of ₹1,500 crore, he said.

However, environmental advocates are puzzled by the numbers. They say they have seen the steady loss of tree cover. Further, reports regularly cite instances of fully grown trees being cut down for construction. More than 20 full grown trees were axed on the VST-Indira Park stretch to make way for the elevated corridor as part of the Strategic Road Development Plan project in 2022. Over the past few months, the pruning, cutting and translocation of trees for the Hyderabad E-Prix has also illustrated the conflict between green initiatives and so-called development. Citizens are campaigning to save nearly 900 banyan trees that are about 100 years old each, on the road to Chevella on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

Questions have also been raised about the awards. It is the administrators who nominate the city for the Arbor Day Foundation's 'Tree City of the World' award by providing a certification from the Mayor on the number of trees. There is no external auditing to establish the truthfulness of the information. When the Mayor was asked about the certification, she did not respond.

Similarly, in a competition involving cities such as Paris, Bogota, Montreal, and Mexico City, Hyderabad emerged the winner and was named 'World Green City' by the International Association of Horticulture Producers (IAHP). The IAHP is a 75-year-old global organisation. Its members include traders of flowers and ornamental plants. The IAHP also gave Hyderabad the award in the 'Living Green for Economic Recovery and Inclusive Growth' category. The awards were given based on statistics filed by city officials and a field visit to locations with avenue plantations, including the 158-km Outer Ring Road that girdles the city.

Nevertheless, while the green initiatives have gained recognition, the State faces the challenge of encroachments into forest lands by the indigenous people. The right for permanent settlement in areas that were once considered forest has been a divisive issue and could impact voting patterns. Of the 119 constituencies in the State Legislature, nine are reserved for Scheduled Tribes. According to the 2011 Census, STs form 9.3% of the State's population. Recently, a forest official was killed while trying to mark boundaries in the forest. Speaking on the floor of the Assembly, Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao promised distribution of 'pattas' (documents of ownership of land) to STs. He added a caveat. The land distribution, he said, is among the last efforts to regularise ownership of land and more encroachments into forests will not be allowed.

Will this dual approach of protecting forests and doing plantation drives pay dividends? It is too early to say. But it is clear that the Telangana government, with its initiatives, has its eyes set on becoming a 'green State'. While the counting of trees planted in a park may not be a barometer of change, it is a step in the right direction. It creates awareness about the environment, which was sorely missing until a few years ago.

Income tax 'raids' surge amid poor conviction rate

The number of search and seizure operations as well as survey actions by the Income Tax Department have swelled in recent years

DATA POINT

Vignesh Radhakrishnan

A survey conducted by the Income Tax Department in the BBC's offices in Delhi and Mumbai over the last week has raised many questions, especially since it was done barely a month after the public broadcaster released a two-part documentary titled 'India: the Modi Question'. The government disabled online access to the documentary immediately after its release and also blocked related tweets.

This is not the first time that the Income Tax Department has visited news media houses after publication of critical coverage. Barely a month after the national editor of the Dainik Bhaskar Group wrote an editorial in *The New York Times* criticising the government's "failures and deceptions" during the pandemic, Income Tax officials searched over 32 business and residential premises connected to the Group across nine cities for "tax evasion." They visited *Newslaundry* and *Bharat Samachar*'s offices in 2021. Both media houses published reports critical of the pandemic.

While the recent survey has put the spotlight on press freedom in particular, there is growing concern that Income Tax "raids" in general are used to intimidate people who are critical of the Union government. Though the term "raid" has become popular, the Income Tax Act does not contain this expression.

The Income Tax Act allows two types of operations – search and seizure actions, and survey actions. The power to conduct a survey, such as the one conducted in the BBC's offices, comes from Section 133A of the Act. **Chart 1** shows the number of such surveys conducted by the Income Tax Department across years for which data were available. As the chart shows, the number of such surveys has more than doubled in recent years.

Chart 2 shows the number of search and seizure actions conducted by the Income Tax Department in two five-year periods – FY11 to FY15 and FY16 to FY20. The chart shows that the number of search and seizure actions has jumped 1.5 times between the two time-periods.

While both these types of actions have surged in recent years, conviction rates have reduced significantly. **Table 3** lists the number of prosecution cases filed in court by the Income Tax Department, the number of persons convicted, and the number of persons convicted as a percentage of cases filed in two five-year periods – FY11 to FY15 and FY16 to FY20. As the table shows, while the percentage share was low in both periods, it further declined in the last five years. The rate reduced by 5% points from 7.3% to 2.4%.

Another factor that can be considered is the compounding of cases. Compounding is a provision where the tax defaulter is allowed to avoid major legal problems by paying a monetary fine in certain cases. **Chart 4** shows the number of prosecution cases filed in court by the Income Tax Department and the number of cases compounded in the three-year periods – FY11 to FY13 and FY16 to FY18. The number of cases compounded is half of those initiated in the latest three years, while it formed a much higher share of cases initiated in the FY11-FY13 period. It must be noted that cases compounded may also include those initiated in previous years.

Chart 5 shows a similar 'surging cases-poor convictions' trend among cases filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), also an economic offence. It shows the number of cases filed under the PMLA. The case count has increased sharply in recent years. There were only 23 convictions in the 5,422 cases filed until March 2022.

Under the scanner

The charts and tables are based on replies given in the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and annual/summary reports published by the Department of Economic Affairs. As frequent changes were made in the Ministry of Finance's annual reports, consistent data were not available across parameters. For instance, the number of compounded cases was not available in the FY22, FY21 annual reports, whereas it was available for many previous years. Also the structure of tables in the summary reports varied between two editions. Calendar years and financial years were alternatively used

A cameraman outside a BBC office. REUTERS

Chart 1 | The number of surveys conducted by the IT department across years for which data were available

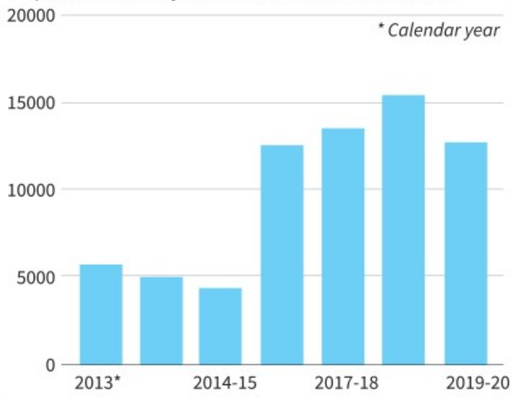


Chart 2 | The number of search and seizure actions conducted by the IT department in two five-year periods — FY11 to FY15 and FY16 to FY20

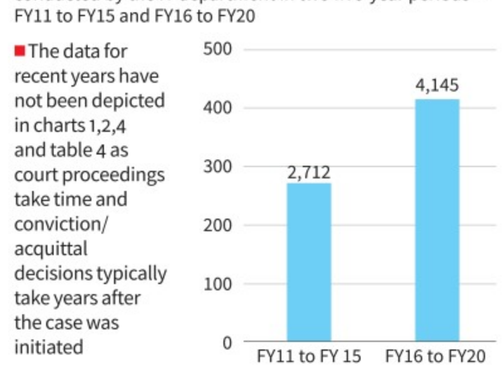

The data for recent years have not been depicted in charts 1,2,4 and table 4 as court proceedings take time and conviction/ acquittal decisions typically take years after the case was initiated
500
400
300
200
100
0
2,712
4,145
FY11 to FY 15
FY16 to FY20

Table 3

Period	Number of prosecution cases launched during year	Number of convictions secured	%
FY11 to FY15	2,046	150	7.3%
FY16 to FY20	11,068	266	2.4%

Chart 4 | Number of prosecution cases initiated in court and the number of cases compounded

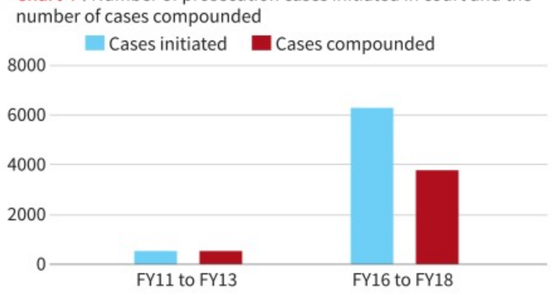
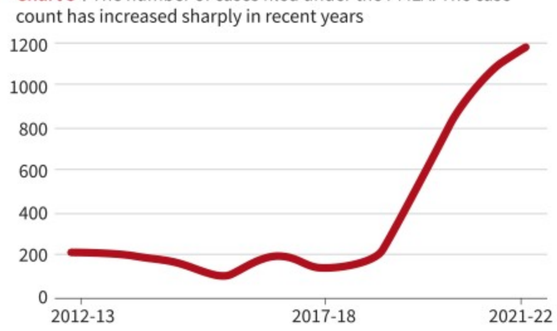


Chart 5 | The number of cases filed under the PMLA. The case count has increased sharply in recent years



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 20, 1973

Stolen idols recovered

New Delhi, Feb. 19: The Delhi Police have recovered 53 idols stolen by a gang of idol-lifters operating all over the country and have taken into custody five persons living in Delhi. Among these is the 4-foot high idol of Ganesa dating back to the tenth century A.D., stolen from a temple in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh in 1969. The idol was sold to a private collector living in the posh locality of Vasant Vihar in Delhi for a price of Rs. 65,000. It weighs about three quintals. The other idols were stolen from temples in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. The police believe that the gang has international contacts and the idols eventually find their way abroad where they fetch very high prices. Investigations are in progress and further details relating to the modus operandi of the gang within the country and abroad have not been disclosed. As many as 35 idols out of the 53 antiques were sold in Delhi to private collectors and antique dealers living in Delhi while the remaining 18 were sold to buyers in Meherauli, near Delhi. Among the other antiques is a statue of Ganapathi with 14 arms, carved in red stone, holding "trishul", dating back to 9th century A.D.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 20, 1923

The Nizam's birthday

Secunderabad, Feb. 13: In the celebration of the Nizam's birthday a parade was held on Fetteh Maidan yesterday before thousands of spectators, when the Regular troops, Imperial Service troops, Goloonda Brigade and Jamiyeth Nizam Mahbub took part under Major Osman Yar Dowlah, A.D.C. Commander, H.E. the Nizam's Regular Force. A royal salute and few de jois were fired in honour of the occasion. H.E.H. the Nizam was present with the princes, his staff, etc. and was received by the Military. At 11 A.M. yesterday H.E.H. the Nizam opened the Hyderabad Industrial Exhibition at the public gardens in the presence of the premier nobles and State officials. His Exalted Highness expressed great satisfaction at the number of exhibits and the excellence of the various industries of the dominions. There are over 10 stalls which are arranged in beautifully constructed booths and Hyderabad may well be proud of the Exhibition which attracted large crowds and will give people from the districts an opportunity of visiting. It is to be open for several weeks.

From Page One

Indians go West, take up 'residence by investment'

According to the report, India ranked fourth in the world in terms of privately-held wealth, after the U.S., China, and Japan.

Shilpa Menon, senior director of the Indian branch of LCR Capital Partners, a global private investment firm, said: "India is really rising in the ranks among successful applicants for the Portugal Golden Visa, climbing to fourth place [globally] in 2022, from fifth place in 2021, and ninth in 2020." The Portuguese scheme benefits individuals and families, providing them with the right to live, work, study, or retire in Portugal and the rest of European Union. "Since the programme's creation, more than 130 visas have been issued to Indian nationals," she said. Among the qualifying requirements, purchasing property worth Euro 500,000 (₹4.4 crore) in a high-density area and creating at least 10 jobs for Portuguese nationals, are mandatory. Five years after the investment, the individual can obtain a Portuguese passport, making them eligible to visit over 150 countries without a visa. Portugal last week decided to end its Golden Visa Scheme, as per a Reuters report.

The EB-5 visa programme of the U.S., which requires a minimum investment amount of $800,000 (around ₹6.6 crore) over a period of 5 to 7 years and the creation of 10 permanent jobs for U.S. citizens, is also much sought after. The visa makes an individual eligible for American citizenship after five years. Goldi Chawla, of CanAm Enterprises, said that in 2021, Indians received 211 EB-5 visas, the third highest of any country. He said that Indian parents were among the highest applicants, investing to give their children faster access to a green card. " [Also] HNIs like business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals such as doctors and engineers are also enthusiastic applicants," he said. For the EB-5 programme, funds are collected in an escrow account and are given out as loans for development and construction projects. "As soon as the project is complete, the borrower refinances this loan with a long-term debt from the bank and repays this in about five years. Most projects, including residential development in the Bay area (San Francisco and adjoining areas) and commercial towers in New York, have done well. Some people have also invested in the hospitality sector," Abhinav Lohia of Golden Gate Global said, adding that the trend did not necessarily mean a flight of wealth from India; instead, it could mean a diversification of funds.

It's not just about investments though. Ms. Menon says that HNIs have broadened their definition of wealth. "Today, wealthy families want better healthcare, open and flexible business environments, and access to better academic and professional opportunities. Alternative residency programmes provide them these options."

Clash breaks out over Dalits offering prayers

"However, today [Saturday], there was another dispute over the same issue and over axing of a tree on the same land. Soon members from both communities arrived and threw stones," he said.

A complaint was later filed by a man named Premlal on behalf of the Dalits, while a counter FIR was registered on the complaint of Ravindra Rao Maratha against Premlal and 33 others for attacking them with weapons. In the first case, provisions of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, have also been slapped on the accused.

In a separate incident on the same day, a group of Dalits accused a group of upper caste people of stopping them from praying at a Siva temple in Chhoti Kasrawad village. An FIR was registered on the complaint of one Manju Bai, a Balai woman who alleged that she was abused over her caste and shoved by upper caste women for offering water to the Sivalinga

CBI pushes questioning on Sisodia's request

"I have written to the CBI and asked for time as I am finalising the Budget of Delhi and it's a crucial time. I have told them that I will come after the last week of February and answer all their questions," Mr. Sisodia, who also holds the Finance portfolio, said.

A CBI official said the agency would issue a fresh notice to him in the coming days.

Fighting seismic threats the Mughal style

His company is seeing an increasing number of projects, especially on the third and ground floor, as these are areas where people assemble. Those who commission them appreciate both its ornamental and practical value. "The only difference is that earlier it was deodar pine wood that was used extensively and now it's walnut," Mr. Qalander added.

Architect Hakim Sameer Hamdani, Design Director at INTACH-Kashmir and author of *The Syncretic Traditions of Islamic Religious Architecture of Kashmir*, traces the introduction of Uroosi in Kashmir to Mughal emperor Shah Jahan for the influence it still retains.

Navy plans for another *Vikrant*-size carrier before *Vikramaditya* retires

The Navy will continue to study the need for a larger and more capable carrier, after placing a repeat order for the *INS Vikrant*-sized carrier, says Navy chief; Cochin Shipyard officials say they can deliver vessel in 8 years from date of order

Dinakar Peri
BENGALURU

As aircraft carrier *INS Vikramaditya* gets ready to sail out of the dockyard after a long refit, the Indian Navy is finalising plans to repeat the order for an *INS Vikrant*-size Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC)-2, with some modifications, which, given the long timelines, may be close to the time *INS Vikramaditya* leaves service, effectively becoming its replacement. While placing a repeat order for the *INS Vikrant*-sized carrier, the Navy will continue to study the need for a larger and more capable carrier, according to the Navy chief, Admiral R. Hari Kumar.

"If we have to design a new carrier, it will take time and we need to bring in new technologies because the present arresting gear and catapult system are undergoing changes. It will be an entirely new design and the ship-building facilities have also to be upgraded. So we thought, if we went for the repeat order of *Vikrant*, the work would start very soon.

The case will go faster, work can start immediately, and cost will also be little less, and we can make some improvements," Admiral Kumar said, speaking at the Aero India show last week.

Operationally, new technologies and drones are coming in that can be launched and recovered from the carrier, which can enhance operational capabilities, he noted.

Refit and ready: *INS Vikramaditya*, which has been through a two-year refit, is set to be back in service soon. FILE PHOTO

Three-carrier system

Initially, the plan was that the IAC-2 should be bigger than IAC-1, he elaborated. *INS Vikrant*'s size is around 44,000 tonnes and the IAC-2 planned was around 65,000 tonnes. The Indian Navy requires three aircraft carriers because when the ship undergoes maintenance, it takes time given its size and the possible delays.

Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) has acquired considerable expertise in building an aircraft carrier with *INS Vikrant* and that would not go idle on a repeat order, Admiral Kumar said, adding, "That can also be utilised."

"So, we are of the view that we will go for repeat order with improved capabilities and, in the meantime, we will study if we need to go for a larger carrier. Till a third aircraft carrier gets ready and is commissioned, *INS Vikramaditya* may also come to the end of its lifetime. Then we would need to build another carrier," Admiral Kumar said.

CSL officials have expressed confidence in being able to build an *INS Vikrant*-sized carrier (with modifications) within eight years from when the order is placed. The country's first IAC, *INS Vikrant*, was commissioned in September 2022 and is currently undergoing aviation trials. It is expected to be operationally ready by the end of 2023. The 262m-long and 62m-wide *INS* Vikrant, displacing 44,800 tonnes, is powered by four General Electric LM2500 engines, which give it a maximum speed of 28 knots and an endurance of 7,500 nautical miles.

'Regional disparities will increase in the absence of assistance to poor States'

Press Trust of India
PATNA

Bihar Finance Minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary said that if the poor States are not given special assistance by the Centre, then regional disparities are bound to increase in the country.

He made the comment on Saturday, referring to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statement that the Finance Commission has made a recommendation to the Centre, in which it said that no State will be accorded the special status.

"I don't know how the Union Finance Minister made such a statement. When the NITI Aayog talks about special assistance to the poorest States, the comment of the Union Finance Minister will certainly increase regional disparities," Choudhary told the Press Trust of India.

Mr. Choudhary said Bihar is the most deserving State that needs special financial assistance from the Centre. While Bihar's growth is better than the national average, it is among the poorest States in the country, he added.

"NITI Aayog has admitted that Bihar made tremendous progress across multiple sectors in the last decade, but owing to its weak base, it may take some more time to catch up with the others. This is the reason that we have been demanding special assistance from the Centre," he said.

The special status was introduced in 1969 to benefit certain backward States having hilly terrains, strategic international borders and economic and infrastructural backwardness. Assam, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Uttarakhand and Telangana have been accorded the status. Telangana got the status as it was carved out of Andhra Pradesh.

Cow vigilante case: police say they didn't harm woman

Press Trust of India
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan police have denied the allegation of a woman who said her full-term pregnant daughter-in-law lost her child after she was assaulted by them during a raid at her house.

Her son, Srikant Pandit, is an accused in a case of murder of two men by cow vigilantes. Mr. Pandit is a member of the cow protection group led by Bajrang Dal leader Monu Manesar.

Dulari Devi, Mr. Pandit's mother, also alleged that the police forcibly took away her two other sons. Bharatpur Superintendent of Police Shyam Singh claimed that Rajasthan and Haryana police had indeed gone to Mr. Pandit's home, but they never entered it.

Christians demand national-level panel to redress 'targeted violence'

Special Correspondent
NEW DELHI

Members of the Christian community on Sunday staged a protest at Jantar Mantar here to draw the attention of the government, judiciary and civil society to the "rising incidence of crime against the community".

They will be sending a memorandum to President Droupadi Murmu, asking for a National Redressal Commission headed by a retired Supreme Court judge to address the issue of "targeted" violence against the community.

The memorandum, which was signed by the community members on Sunday, said, "Continued waves of vile hate speech and targeted violence have buffeted the Christian community in recent years, and in particular in 2022-23. The violence seems to have reached a crescendo in January and February 2023." The United Christian Forum, a human rights groups, recorded 598 incidents of violence against Christians in 21 States till the end of December 2022, a press release issued by the community said.

Call for action: Christians in New Delhi protesting on Sunday against the violence against the community. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The States of Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka and Jharkhand were of particular concern, it noted. It flagged registration of malicious FIRs, non-registration of FIRs despite complaints filed by victims, and illegal detentions as chief concerns.

The memorandum sought the strengthening of human rights monitoring mechanisms, including the National Commission for Minorities and National Human Rights Commission, speedy closure of cases where false allegations had been leveled against Christians, and the constitution of a national redressal commission headed by a retired Supreme Court judge with representation of the community.

One member of the community said: "We are being accused of forcibly converting people to Christianity. Churches are being attacked, our people are being beaten up and arrested. The community members are living in a constant state of panic."

'Temples destroyed by the Mughals were rebuilt by Shivaji'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Minister hails the Maratha king while opening Shivsrushti, a theme park based on former ruler's life

Hailing Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj for rebuilding the temples destroyed by the Mughals and other foreign invaders, Union Home Miniter Amit Shah on Sunday said the restoration work that continued after Shivaji Maharaj is being taken forward by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Shivaji Maharaj was not just a name but an ideology, he said. "His inspiring life story taught generations to practise one's language and religion with pride, and to be prepared to lay down one's life while discharging moral duties and for the fight for *swaraj* [self-rule]," he said.

Addressing an impressive gathering after inaugurating the first phase of Shivsrushti, a theme park based on the life of Shivaji Maharaj, in Pune, Mr. Shah said that last week, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant inaugurated the redeveloped Saptakoteshwar Temple, which was reconstructed by Shivaji Maharaj.

"After Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, this tradition of restoration of temples was continued by Bajirao Peshva, Nanasaheb Peshva, Madhavrao Peshva and lastly Punyashlok Ahilyadevi. Today, our PM Narendra Modi is also taking that work ahead as Ram Mandir is being built, the Kashi Vishwanath corridor has also been constructed and Somnath temple is being decorated with gold," he said.

The Shivsrushti project was first conceptualised by eminent historian Babasaheb Purandare, who formed the 'Maharaja Chhatrapati Pratishthan' for its execution.

Mr. Shah expressed confidence in the ₹438-crore Shivsrushti project being completed within the stipulated time. In the first phase, an effort has been made to preserve many incidents of Shivaji Maharaj's life at a cost of ₹60 crore, he said.

J&K bars govt. staff from criticising policies online

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The J&K administration has barred government employees from criticising or posting adverse comments on the government policies on social media platforms.

Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Mehta, in a recently held meeting, directed all the administrative secretaries in the Union Territory "to monitor the social media networks on a regular basis and identify the employees criticising and commenting adversely on the government policies and achievements etc. on the social media".

Mr. Mehta directed the officials "to issue notices to these employees under intimation to the General Administrative Department (GAD)". The GAD is issuing necessary 'Circular Instructions' in this regard, an official communique said.

The J&K administration directions come amid the ongoing anti-encroachment drive in the UT. The drive evoked criticism from several sections of the society in J&K.

J&K govt. to 'frame policy for poor' before resuming anti-encroachment drive

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has decided to "consolidate data" of the 49-day eviction drive and "frame a policy" before resuming the anti-encroachment drive against local people occupying government land illegally in the Union Territory.

A revenue official confirmed to *The Hindu* that there was no fresh order to evict occupiers or retrieve different categories of land from locals, including 'State' land, 'Kahcharai' or community land, Roshini Act land, which was bought by lease holders from the previous regime but the scheme was nullified by the present dispensation.

Five days ago, *The Hindu* reported that the Union Home Ministry had intervened and halted the drive, stressing on following legal procedures before using bulldozers against the occupiers. Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi also raised the issue in New Delhi.

Major impact: One estimate suggested that over two lakh '*kanals*' (24,999.9974 acres) of land have been retrieved. FILE PHOTO

One estimate suggested that over two lakh '*kanals*' (24,999.9974 acres) of land have been retrieved from locals, including from members of the National Conference, Congress, Peoples Democratic Party and Peoples Conference.

The L-G administration has hinted at evolving a policy for poor and landless locals, who are at present occupying land in the U.T. However, many locals claimed that they "were evicted" during the drive though they have been occupying the land for several generations and had turned large tracts of unproductive land productive by virtue of farming.

The drive, which saw bulldozers removing shelters and structures of poor shopkeepers, not only attracted criticism from local political parties but also from The Resistance Front militant outfit, which warned of attacks on Revenue Department officials.

L-G Manoj Sinha clarified in his recent speeches that no poor or landless would be affected and the drive was targeted at influential land grabbers and those who misused their positions. He had asked the Forest Department to carry out geographic information system mapping and ground-based digitisation "to effectively tackle the challenge of encroachment".

Congress says party aware of its role in uniting Opposition

'Our job is to do that only. To try and lessen the BJP numbers,' K.C. Venugopal says when asked about remarks made by Nitish Kumar that the BJP will not cross 100 seats in the 2024 election if Congress took the lead in uniting the Opposition

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday said that it well understood its role in uniting the Opposition, ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha election, and would deliberate on this during the party's plenary session in Raipur, Chhattisgarh from February 24 to 26.

The party said the plenary would decide if elections were to be held to the Congress Working Committee, the highest decision-making body of the party.

Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said the party had taken an initiative in uniting the Opposition by inviting like-minded parties during its recently concluded Bharat Jodo Yatra and while taking up the Adani issue in Parliament.

"Our job is to do that only. To try and lessen the BJP numbers," Mr. Venugopal replied to a question on remarks made by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar that the BJP would not be able to cross 100 seats in the 2024 election if the Congress took the lead in uniting the Opposition.

He said the Congress had taken a "clear-cut" initiative in bringing the Opposition parties together and would certainly do that in 2024. "The direction on Opposition unity will come from the party's plenary session, where this issue will be deliberated upon," he said.

Party position: Congress leaders K.C. Venugopal (left) and Jairam Ramesh address the media at the party office in New Delhi on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

> The Congress is the only political party that has never made a compromise with the BJP anywhere
>
> **JAIRAM RAMESH**
> Congress general secretary

'Certificate not needed'

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said while the party welcomed the Bihar Chief Minister's remarks, it was well aware of its role and did not need a "certificate" from anyone.

Asserting that the plenary would discuss the Opposition unity issue further, he said the Congress was already in pre-poll alliances in seven States. "Before 2024, there were several Assembly polls. But without a strong Congress, strong Opposition unity is impossible," he said.

"The Congress is the only political party that has never made a compromise with the BJP anywhere. There are some Opposition parties who come for [Rajya Sabha Leader of the Opposition] Mallikarjun Kharge's meetings, but their actions are in favour of the ruling party. We are not two-faced with respect to the BJP," he said without naming any party.

He said the plenary would deliberate on whether there would be a pre-poll alliance and on other such modalities.

He said the Bharat Jodo Yatra was a "transformational" moment for Indian politics, which Mr. Kumar had acknowledged.

Mr. Venugopal said the plenary would be a reflection of the sentiments provided by the Bharat Jodo Yatra and an extension of the Udaipur Chintan Shivir. The theme or tagline would be *Haath se Haath Jodo*.

The agenda for the plenary session would be finalised at a steering committee meeting to be held on the first day, which would deliberate on whether elections would be held to the CWC. The CWC has 23 members, 11 of whom are nominated and 12 elected. However, for the past 25 years, elections have not taken place. Some senior leaders have demanded elections to the crucial body.

Giving further details on the plenary, Mr. Venugopal said around 15,000 delegates would participate.

There are 1,338 All India Congress Committee delegates and 487 co-opted ones, which comes to a total of 1,825 delegates. Besides, there will be a total of 9,915 Pradesh Congress Committee delegates, he said.

The session will end with a rally, and top leaders will address the public meeting.

Kumari Selja, Congress general secretary in charge of party affairs in Chhattisgarh, said of the total AICC delegates, there were 235 women and 501 below the age of 50. Besides, there would be 704 from the general category, 228 from minorities, 381 from Other Backward Classes, 192 from the Scheduled Castes and another 133 from the Scheduled Tribes.

Ahead of Raipur plenary, Congress leaders debate need for CWC elections

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Some argue that holding elections can create fissures that the party can ill afford now

The 85th plenary session of the Congress, to be held in Raipur between February 24 and 26, will not only endorse Mallikarjun Kharge's election as the party president but is also expected to provide a road map for the party's political revival before the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

From organisational reforms to expressing a willingness to forge electoral alliances, the Raipur session will be watched for the political message it seeks to convey.

On day one, the outgoing steering committee, which is functioning in place of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), will decide whether or not there would be election to the party's highest decision-making body.

However, opinion is divided on holding elections. A section of the party leaders argue that since Mr. Kharge has been elected party chief after a keenly fought contest with Lok Sabha member Shashi Tharoor, he should also encourage elections to the CWC. Several others, however, have argued holding elections could create fissures among workers and the party can ill afford a divided house before next year's Lok Sabha election. "When facing an election next year, it is perhaps not the time to experiment. If there were no Lok Sabha polls, I would have favoured elections to the CWC," Praveen Chakravarty, who heads the Data Analytics Department of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), had told *The Hindu* in an earlier interview.

Another senior leader, who had earlier favoured elections to the CWC, too had changed his view. "The party doesn't seem to be in the mood to hold another election as that could bring internal divisions to the fore," he said.

The final decision on the CWC election, however, will be taken on February 24 at the meeting of the steering committee. The party is also preparing to change the composition of the CWC by amending the party constitution to include former Prime Ministers and former party presidents as permanent members to the CWC. This will automatically make Manmohan Singh, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi permanent members.

With a non-Gandhi at the helm, the party may feel the need to clearly spell out the roles for the Gandhis. While Ms. Gandhi continues to be leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, Mr. Gandhi does not have any formal position. However, after the five-month-long Bharat Jodo Yatra (BJY), the Congress has already made Mr. Gandhi the face of its political campaign *Haath Se Haath Jodo Abhiyan* (Joining Hands Together).

With the successful completion of the yatra, party cadres at the plenary may lead a chorus to project Mr. Gandhi as their prime ministerial contender. But the Congress may have to do a tightrope walk as any formal announcement could push away potential allies.

Signal on alliance

The party's articulation on future alliances is certainly going to be one of the most keenly followed aspect of the plenary session. While it can claim to have successful alliances in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Bihar and Jharkhand, the States such as Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Assam are a challenge.

Together these States have 84 Lok Sabha seats but the Congress is neither strong nor does it have any alliance with the powerful regional parties. And the emergence of the AAP has further eroded the party's support base.

'Vinod Adani gained from group's activities'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday alleged that Gautam Adani's elder brother Vinod Adani is at the centre of financial flows that leverage one group of Adani assets to send loans to another, and asked if this was not worthy of an investigation by the SEBI and the Enforcement Directorate.

Posing a set of three questions to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as part of the party's "*Hum Adani ke Hain Kaun*" series, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh alleged that the Adani group has made "misrepresentations" about Mr. Vinod's central role in its "nefarious activities".

Recently, the group stocks had taken a beating on the bourses after U.S.-based short-seller Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations, including fraudulent transactions, against the business conglomerate whose chairman is Mr. Gautam. The group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements.

Mission accomplished

Friends of Turkey: The final National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team that participated in Operation Dost in Turkey back in New Delhi on Sunday. Three teams of 151 National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel and dog squads extended assistance to the earthquake-affected country. ANI (RELATED REPORTS ON WORLD PAGE)

Raut alleges deal of ₹2,000 crore over Sena name, symbol

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Sanjay Raut

Two days after the Election Commission recognised Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's faction as the real Shiv Sena, Uddhav Thackeray loyalist and Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday alleged that a "deal of ₹2,000 crore" had taken place to "purchase" the Shiv Sena party name and its symbol, the bow and arrow.

However, Sada Sarvankar, MLA, from the Shinde camp dismissed the claim and asked, "Is Sanjay Raut a cashier?"

"I believe... a transaction worth ₹2,000 crore has taken place to get the election symbol and name... This is a preliminary figure and is 100% true. Many things will be disclosed soon. This has never happened in the country's history," Mr. Raut claimed.

Claiming that the transaction took place over the past six months, he said that it was a builder close to the ruling party who had shared the information with him.

"It was purely a commercial deal and not on merit," he told reporters here.

On Saturday, Uddhav Thackeray termed Chief Minister Shinde a "thief" who stole the party symbol and name and said he should be taught a lesson.

"We should not rest till we teach the thief a lesson in elections. Start preparing for [Mumbai civic] elections immediately. I would travel across Maharashtra from February 21 to March 3," he told the supporters.

Denying the allegations levelled, State Forest Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar said that the former's baseless statements were an attempt to malign independent institutions such as the Supreme Court and the Election Commission.

"People will teach a lesson to those who make such allegations by disrespecting democracy," he said.

Meanwhile, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pawar said he will not get involved in the ongoing controversy, adding that he had already clarified his stand on the matter.

'Few benefited from Central schemes in Meghalaya'

Press Trust of India
TURA

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that Central welfare schemes benefited only a few families in Meghalaya. Addressing election rallies in Mahendraganj, Rongjeng, Mendipathar and Kharkutta, Mr. Sarma on Saturday said only the BJP could ensure that all benefits reached the people of Meghalaya.

"Schemes such as the PM Awas Yojna benefited only a few families," he said. Listing the welfare schemes undertaken by his government in Assam, he said the BJP would extend similar benefits in Meghalaya if it was voted to power. "The BJP promised to give jobs to 1 lakh youth in Assam. Already 50,000 people have been given appointments, and the remaining will get appointments by May," he said.

Women's group sets up gates to curb supply of liquor during Nagaland polls

Press Trust of India
KOHIMA

Nagaland is a dry State but with the February 27 Assembly election campaign gaining momentum, a women's organisation in Phek district has set up check gates to restrict the flow of liquor offered as inducement to voters during the poll process.

Phek is occupied by the Chakhesang and Pochury tribes having five Assembly constituencies with four seats in the Chakhesang area and also has some villages in the Meluri constituency of the Pochury tribe. Concerned about the ill-effects of liquor and also liquor offered as inducement during the Assembly election, the womenfolk of the Chakhesang Naga tribe under the Chakhesang Mothers' Association (CMA) have put up around 100 checkpoints in their area, Zhonelü Tunyi, president of the CMA, the apex body of womenfolk for the Chakhesang community in Phek district, said.

Say no to alcohol: School students demanding an end to the sale of liquor in Nagaland. PTI

"During elections the flow of liquor as inducement is very high while many people get into physical fights and clashes in support of candidates, becoming enemies and even leading to killing.

"Therefore, our main objective is to have a free, fair and inducement-free election with the expectation that once such flow of inducements is stopped, people will remain sober and avoid getting into conflicts," she said.

Also during elections, once people get drunk without being shameful they repeatedly ask money from candidates and political leaders, she said.

Liquor for vote

Accepting that the flow of liquor continues even during other times, she said, "We are also mothers and have our own responsibilities at home and personal work as well, making it difficult for us to maintain the checks throughout the year, but during election period, the flow of liquor increases manifold for inducing voters."

Asked about the CMA putting up check gates to restrict flow of liquor in the district, the police said such moral policing was appreciated, but the enforcers should not take the law into their hands and report issues directly to them.

The CMA feels that if people remain in proper sense, such skirmishes can be avoided and the electioneering process will be peaceful, she said.

"We are having sleepless nights because we want our society and future generations to be better," said Ms. Tunyi. It is not only about the highways and main roads where the vehicles are being stopped for frisking but the women have set up bamboo check gates in their own village entry points, she said.

Padyatra by VHP, others makes Cong. govt. nervous

Special Correspondent
RAIPUR

A month-long 700-km *padyatra* organised by right-wing groups has raised the political temperature in Chhattisgarh that goes to the polls later this year.

The organisers of the 'Hindu Swabhiman Jagran Sant Padyatra', under which saints will cover a distance of about 700 km between them, have outlined "appealing for a Hindu Rashtra constitutionally", and raising awareness against "religious conversions" and "love jihad" as some of their objectives.

The ruling Congress, which is trying to blend religious symbolism and strong sub-national cultural identity in its messaging, feels that by raising issues that were straight out of the BJP's playbook, the organisers were helping the BJP polarise voters ahead of the polls.

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File No : PW2/AMRUT/18375/23 Dt : 17.02.2023
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E-Tender is invited from the qualified companies/firms as specified in the bid document through e-tender for the works "AMRUT-1.0-Thrissur Corporation-Supply and Laying of 800 mm DI K9 Pipe line (Additional CWGM - 18.70 km) from Peechi WTP to OHSRs at Thekkinkadu - Pipeline Work - General Civil Work"
Etender ID - 2023 LSGD_559543_1
Schedule available from : - 18/02/2023, 09.00 AM To : - 27/02/2023, 4.00 PM
Opening of tender : - 02.03.2023, 11.30 AM
For more details logon to etenders.kerala.gov.in, www.lsgkerala.gov.in
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Thrissur Corporation

INBRIEF

Brigadier B.D. Mishra sworn in as the new L-G of Ladakh

Brigadier B.D. Mishra (retd) was sworn in as Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) of the Union Territory of Ladakh on Sunday, at a time when the region is witnessing a major upheaval over demands for Statehood and for a special status under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. N. Kotiswar Singh, Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, administered the oath to Brig. Mishra on the occasion. Brig. Mishra is retired from the Army and has previously served as an L-G of Arunachal Pradesh. He takes over the reins of Ladakh L-G from R.K. Mathur.

Virtual court hearings have raised efficiency, says SC judge

Virtual court hearings had increased efficiency and it was necessary to utilise this system for which a vast infrastructure had been created and a large amount of money sanctioned by the government, Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul said on Sunday. Speaking at the concluding session of the four-day 'Delhi Arbitration Weekend' in New Delhi, he said parties could also insist on physical or hybrid hearing to use it as a means to delay the arbitration process and the arbitral tribunal has to take due steps to balance the process and not delay it. PTI

'India saw record over 15,000 organ transplants in 2022'

India has witnessed a fast resurgence in organ transplant activities post COVID-19 and, for the first time, achieved more than 15,000 transplants a year in 2022, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said on Sunday. Along with this, there was an annual increase of 27% in the transplant numbers, Mr. Bhushan said at the "National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation Scientific Dialogue 2023", in New Delhi. The event was aimed at bringing all the stakeholders under one roof to brainstorm ideas about interventions and best practices in the field of organ and tissue transplant. PTI

India plans to export solar power: official

Country can produce annually solar modules that can generate 100 GW and become a net exporter of power, says Secretary, Ministry for New and Renewable Energy, Bhupinder Bhalla; high customs duty on Chinese components, land acquisition challenges hamper switch to non-fossil sources

Jacob P. Koshy
NEW DELHI

By 2026, Indian industry will be able to manufacture every year solar modules that can generate 100 gigawatts of power, and help the country be a net exporter of solar power. This will significantly aid India's target of installing 500 GW of electricity capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030, Bhupinder Bhalla, Secretary, Ministry for New and Renewable Energy, told *The Hindu* in an exclusive interaction.

India was to have installed 175 GW of renewable energy – from solar, wind, biomass and small hydropower sources – by December 2022, but has only installed 122 GW. Of this, solar power was to have been 100 GW, though only 62 GW has been installed.

A key bottleneck has been the cost of solar modules (or panels). While India has traditionally relied on Chinese-made components such as polysilicone wafers, necessary to make modules, higher customs duty on them (to make equivalent Indian-manufactured components more competitive) has shrunk supply.

Going local

"We will need about 30-40 GW for our domestic purposes annually and the rest can be used for export. The incentive schemes that are in place are designed to encourage the manufacturers of wafers. We have never had polysilicone manufacturing in India and this is the first time we will be making ingots and wafers in India. This is necessary for the future health of the solar ecosystem in India," Mr. Bhalla said.

Apart from module prices, land acquisition has been a major challenge for solar power manufacturers. Despite the Centre commissioning 57 large solar parks with a capacity of 40 GW in recent years, only 10 GW has been operationalised.

Against target: India was to have installed 175 GW of renewable energy by December 2022, but has only installed 122 GW. REUTERS

"Installing a megawatt of solar power requires on average four acres of land. So various developers face challenges in acquiring land and that is one reason for the delay. Some projects have been cancelled, for lack of progress, but we expect 40 GW to be fully commissioned in the next two years," Mr. Bhalla said.

The future phase of India's renewable energy development will be led by hybrid projects and renewable energy parks that will host solar and wind projects along with battery storage systems. "States have been demanding consistent, dependable power and that can be done only if solar and wind power is stored [via batteries] and made available on demand. This is, of course, a challenge globally," he said.

Impact of Adani fallout

The travails of the Adani Group of Companies, several of which had announced investments in solar and green hydrogen infrastructure, wouldn't significantly impact India's long-term renewable energy goals. "While the Adani Group and its commitments to renewable energy are certainly significant, we have multiple other companies that can step in. There is tremendous interest in India by sovereign wealth funds and other investors and so I don't see any impact on our renewable energy plans," Mr. Bhalla said.

He said the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Uttham Mahabhiyan (PM KUSUM) scheme, which aims to help farmers access reliable daytime solar power for irrigation, reduce power subsidies, and thereby decarbonise agriculture, was behind schedule because of the "high cost of finance" for farmers.

Under the scheme, ₹34,422 crore is to be spent by the Centre to have farmers or farmer groups install 10,000-MW solar power plants, installation of 20-lakh solar-powered agriculture pumps that are not connected to the grid (off-grid), and converting 15 lakh agriculture pumps that are already connected to the grid into solar-powered pumps.

As of December 31, 2022 only 88.46 MW of solar capacity had been added, 181,058 solar pumps had been installed, and 1,174 grid-connected pumps had been converted. The deadline for the scheme has been shifted to 2026. "We are looking at ways to help farmers access loans from bank at cheaper rates," Mr. Bhalla said.

In prayers

Women take part in a congregation at the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar on Mehraj-u-Alam, marking the ascension of Prophet Muhammad to heaven, on Sunday. The shrine houses a relic believed to be a hair of the Prophet. NISSAR AHMAD

RPF's facial recognition system pilot on target in 96% of cases, says its chief

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

With a view to enhancing security at railway stations, the Indian Railways is looking at installing facial recognition systems at 200 stations, Sanjay Chander, Director-General (DG) of the Railway Police Force (RPF), told *The Hindu* in an interview.

Sanjay Chander

A pilot project implemented in Bengaluru using 30-odd high-quality CCTV cameras and software tech has been successful in tracking "wanted" people and issuing alerts to the RPF. "We have found that the facial recognition systems are very robust, even if a person is veiled or wearing a mask. If we have a matching photo on our wanted list, the system will capture any visible feature like the cheekbones or eyes and issue alerts," Mr. Chander explained.

To test the tech, the RPF used masked decoys and received matches in 96% of the cases. "There are already CCTVs in 861 stations. Also, 5,668 coaches have CCTV cameras installed inside. We now need to upgrade technology at these locations to extract quality feed," he said.

Nirbhaya Fund

While the RPF had the mandate of running the pilot experiment in Bengaluru, it does not currently have a separate capital expenses budget head to fund the proposal. "Hence the proposal has been moved from the Railways to the Ministry of Women and Child Development to approve budget from the Nirbhaya Fund for the purpose," said Mr. Chander.

There is an urgent need for the Railways to beef up technology for securing its humongous porous infrastructure as the RPF is reeling under a deficiency of human resources, he said, adding, "Of 74,719 sanctioned posts, up to 65,862 are filled, rest of the 8,857 posts are lying vacant. We have nearly 1,700 to 1,800 personnel retiring annually and recruitment cycles are not regular."

Child trafficking

On top of the RPF's agenda is dealing with a dual issue of tackling child and drug trafficking.

Of the 559 trafficked persons rescued in 2022, a majority of them were underage boys (430) followed by 85 girls, 18 adult males and 26 females. "Up to 193 traffickers were arrested. We want to deploy all resources to get to the root of the problem," he said. Up to ₹80 crore worth narcotic drugs were seized in 2022 on the rail route.

Mr. Chander emphasised that tech was important to tackle these crimes if perpetrators with shady movements are caught in action. "There is a considerable backlog in finishing background checks of contractual staffers due to lack of manpower in the RPF," he said.

Corroded wires among causes of Morbi tragedy: SIT

Press Trust of India
MORBI

The Gujarat government-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) has found in its preliminary probe that corrosion on nearly half of the wires on a cable and welding of old suspenders with new ones were some of the major faults that led to the collapse of the suspension bridge in Morbi last year in which 135 people were killed.

The report said there were nearly 300 persons on the bridge at the time of collapse, which was "far more" than its capacity. FILE PHOTO

These findings are part of the 'Preliminary Report on Morbi Bridge Incident' submitted by the five-member SIT in December 2022. The report was recently shared with the Morbi Municipality.

Ajanta Manufacturing Limited (Oreva Group) was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the British-era suspension bridge on the Machchu that collapsed on October 30. The SIT had found several lapses in repairs, maintenance and operation of the bridge.

The SIT noted that one of the two main cables of the bridge was having issues of corrosion and nearly half of its wires "may be already broken" even before the cable snapped. According to the SIT, the main cable on the upstream side of the river snapped, leading to the tragedy.

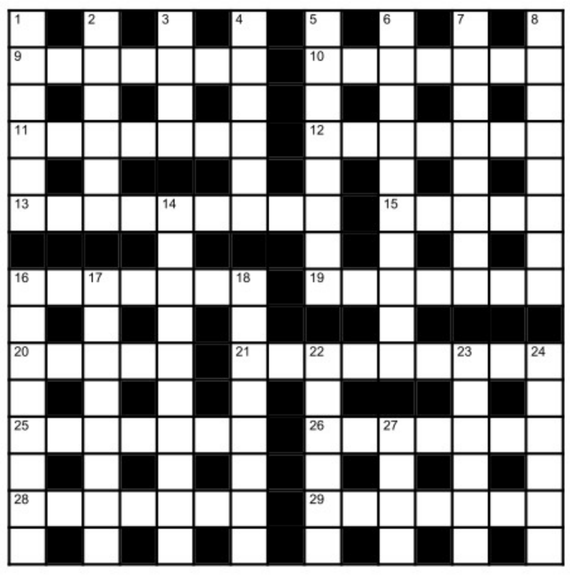
The report said there were nearly 300 persons on the bridge at the time of collapse, which was "far more" than its load-bearing capacity. The actual capacity of the bridge will be confirmed by laboratory reports, the SIT added. The report added that replacing individual wooden planks with an aluminium deck also played a role in the collapse.

CROSSWORD + 13793

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

9 Pleasing victory in the neighbourhood (7)
10 Glaciers in space, maybe one hundred in the front (7)
11 A state of non-existence is present in this place (7)
12 Glance east, maybe destroyed without energy (7)
13 Benchmark is roughly 0.9 metres, stay with it (9)
15 Police weapon again modelled in counter (5)
16 Country entangled in knots after deporting alien (7)
19 Backed do it yourself recipe for tongue (7)
20 Being a provocateur in social media? Timepass? Disconnect (5)
21 May break down in remorse for retaliation (9)
25 White of an egg is blue? Man this is crazy (7)
26 Beau has lost heart, in uncontrollable grief finding an insect (7)
28 At first, George rushed with tea reportedly to the receiver (7)
29 Member in team faces resistance (7)

Down

1 Score? Third batsman ran second bye (6)
2 Reply of parliamentarians were held (6)
3 From the sources, London operators delivered enough ore deposit (4)
4 Good-bye men I am burying a national (6)
5 Be like Wesley, losing heart every 15 days (8)
6 Desperately in trouble losing dollars again and again (10)
7 Terrible skater in West Indies sport (5,3)
8 Sodium nitrate and calcium sulphate? (8)
14 Could be a horse that is a solid friend (10)
16 Divorce sergeant (8)
17 Bird becomes larger without nose (8)
18 Looped in action, its nuts (8)
22 Bird in gust, one at north (6)
23 Represent English doctor on overdose at Yard (6)
24 Police officer in rest mauled by animals (6)
27 Stop on road (4)

SUDOKU

			5	3			4	
	5	7				2		
6	3							1
		1			3			
			2	1	6			
			9			4		
7							8	3
		4				9	5	
	9			8	1			

No.SS5715 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

5	9	4	2	7	1	6	3	8
7	6	1	4	3	8	2	5	9
8	3	2	6	5	9	7	4	1
2	5	8	7	1	4	9	6	3
1	4	9	3	8	6	5	7	2
6	7	3	9	2	5	1	8	4
9	1	6	8	4	7	3	2	5
4	2	7	5	9	3	8	1	6
3	8	5	1	6	2	4	9	7

FAITH

Four great qualities of Lord

Vatsalya, Samithva, Soulabhya and Souseelya are the four great qualities that are ever with God and they are called 'Guna Chatushtayam'. Vatsalya refers to His not minding our derelictions, defects and faults. Swamithva denotes His supremacy. No one can be equal or above Him. Soulabhya means though He is the supreme most, He comes down from His level and is ever ready to accept us. Souseelya indicates His simplicity and unassuming quality. Through Arjuna He reveals to us to take refuge unto Him. (*Maam Ekam Saranam Vraja*). His supremacy called Paratvam and Soulabhyam can be seen through His acting as a charioteer to Arjuna. Arjuna was directing and even commanding Krishna to zip through the chariot in various directions not realising that the very Lord is seated before him. At the end of all 17 days of war, Lord Krishna got down from the chariot first and holding the chariot with one hand He helped Arjuna get down like a chauffeur getting down from the car and helping his boss come out. This shows His Soulabhya.

But on the last day He asked Arjuna to get down first before Him. Arjuna even picked up a quarrel with Krishna why. But Krishna was insistent and He got down next. Soon the chariot was engulfed by fire and burnt. Otherwise Arjuna would have been charred to death in the chariot itself. This shows His 'Paratva', said Valayapettai Sri Ramachariar in a discourse. It is said that both God and His divine consort are competing with each other to extend their blessings to the people who surrender. Even unasked Sri Sita protected all the Rakshasas after Ravana's death.

MONEYWISE

ASKUS

K. Nitya Kalyani

Q I'm a 33-year-old male and an employee of a corporate company in Chennai. I have corporate insurance which is providing adequate cover to my family using the top-up option. I would like to continue with the same insurer even when I change companies since I can use the no pre-existing waiting period for my parents who are in their mid-70s.

My company allows me to do this even after resignation by paying a premium amount to the insurer before the last working day. However, this is allowed only when the employee resigns in India. Kindly guide me on how to get the coverage from the same insurance company even when the resignation happens in a foreign country, or the insurance portability to a different insurer without waiting period.

R. MURALI KRISHNA

A Continuing employer-provided group health insurance after resignation/ retirement is something many people wish to do.

Group corporate health insurance policies are bespoke and the terms, conditions, premium rates and so on are highly specific to each contract and renegotiable on each annual renewal.

As such, the clause that you cannot continue with the same insurer if you resign while posted outside India is something specific to your employer and that insurer. You can work with them and try to get a waiver.

However, you should be able to get an individual health insurance policy with similar coverage for you and your family members going forward. Please expect that the premium will be higher. However, you can submit information about your previous unbroken coverage, having worked off the waiting period and your claim history and request the insurer to extend favourable terms being a returning customer and with a clear insurance and claims history. Any service provider knows the value of customer retention as opposed to the efforts of acquiring a new customer with clear and documented history. You can use your insurance and claims history to get comparable cover from a different insurer as well. Just ask the existing insurer to issue a suitable letter and name all the insureds under your cover.

Q I am working in the Armed Forces. I have an insurance policy with an annual subscription of ₹50,000 since 2020. I have already paid two premiums but in two years I have got returns of ₹9,000 only.

Is it wise to continue with the policy or should I diversify my investment in SIPs or something else?

NAME WITHHELD ON REQUEST

A Your query does not make it clear what kind of insurance policy you have although it sounds as if it is a unit-linked insurance policy since you mention returns.

So, I will respond with that assumption. Please see the policy value in its entirety and not just periodic pay-outs. Consider changing the fund option in your policy in the framework of its terms and conditions. The returns will vary from option to option and the data is available. Now find a similar mutual fund with SIP option and compare historic returns. Depending on which sounds more beneficial you can make your decision. Don't forget that your ULIP has a life cover attached.

You have to take that sum assured for that period and see how much a term policy for that combination costs you. Adjust the ₹50,000 contribution downwards by this amount as only the remainder goes towards providing you your return and you have to compare the mutual fund returns for this adjusted investment amount. If the mutual fund option is significantly more beneficial plan future investments accordingly. However, if you want to discontinue the ULIP please enquire with your agent/ broker/ insurance company what you stand to lose if you do this. You may have a lock in period when you will simply lose what you paid and if you wait that out you may get some residual value whether in cash as a surrender value or a smaller life cover going forward if there is an option of making the policy paid up.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

Term insurance plans tailor-made for NRIs

Insurance plans purchased from an Indian insurer are better fit for an NRI's specific requirements, such as protection against critical ailments, or benefits for nominees who are residing in India

MADE IN INDIA

Rhishabh Garg

In one's financial planning journey, term insurance is perhaps the most critical element of the investment portfolio. The reasons are many - primarily, it provides financial security for the loved ones in the event of the policyholder's death. It can help pay for regular expenses as well as cover long-term debts and provide a source of income for the deceased's family.

Knowing that your loved ones will be taken care of in your absence provides a great deal of mental peace. While mental peace is paramount for everyone, it becomes especially relevant if you stay away from your native land.

Just as it is vital for consumers residing in India, term insurance is equally important, if not more, for NRIs. In the event of unanticipated events like illness, injury or death, it can offer a financial shield and ensure that their family's future is not compromised.

However, staying in a foreign country doesn't mean that they have to necessarily buy the policy from that very country.

In fact, NRIs should ideally opt for a term plan from India to avail a number of benefits.

> A term insurance policy purchased from Singapore or the UAE, for example, would cost 40-50% more than one purchased from India

> Insurers have also started to tie-up with local service providers to enable medical check-ups at home at no additional cost

Affordability

It is financially wiser for NRIs to purchase term insurance from India.

Term insurance policies available in India are a lot more cost-effective and provide more extensive coverage than those offered in other nations. By paying a comparatively lower premium, NRIs can purchase a term plan that offers a high amount of life cover. Particularly, when it comes to NRIs residing in developed nations, the price differential in some instances might be as high as 50-60%. A term insurance policy purchased from Singapore or the UAE, for example, would cost 40-50% more than one purchased from India.

This becomes possible because of relatively lower re-insurance rates and additional GST benefit of up to 18%. With abundant options available from multiple insurance companies, the Indian insurance market provides a range of products to meet a range of requirements and price points.

All-inclusive

Indian insurance companies design their products with the Indian consumer in mind, in contrast with plans in other countries (like the NRI's host nation) which are created with the local residents in mind.

In fact, Indian insurers have products specifically for NRIs which are carefully designed keeping their needs in mind. Hence, insurance plans purchased from an Indian insurer may be a better fit for an NRI's specific insurance requirements, such as protection against critical ailments, or benefits for nominees who are residing in India. Indian term plans also make more sense for NRIs who have family members residing in India, because of higher comfort when dealing with local insurance providers for claim settlement.

Tele-medical check-ups

Planning a trip to India is no longer required for NRIs who want to purchase a term plan.

The ability of NRIs to purchase a term plan from India while residing in their host country has been made possible with the introduction of tele-medical or video medical examinations.

Simply put, an NRI does not have to be physically present in India in order to purchase a term plan.

With the simple issuance procedure made possible by video-medicals, they can quickly purchase a term plan from any location in the world.

When the pandemic first started, the underwriting guidelines were stricter and policy buyers had to submit to physical examinations. The coverage sums were restricted. But now that laws and regulations have been relaxed, NRIs can get substantial cover with tele-medical checks within a few clicks and through online payment. Insurers have also started to tie-up with local service providers to enable medical check-ups at home, without any additional cost to the customer.

Other benefits

Purchasing term plans from India also offer NRIs other benefits like coverage for terminal illnesses wherein they get a lump sum payout in case of the diagnosis of a terminal illness. They can also opt for long-term coverage that provides protection even for as long as 99 years.

Accidental death benefit rider is also available that offers an extra sum assured and provides additional protection in case of accidental death, irrespective of where the policyholder resides. To sum up, buying insurance from India offers NRIs complete financial security that they require at an affordable price.

Geographical restrictions no longer prevent NRI clients from purchasing term insurance plans in India. Especially amid recurrent COVID surge, they can buy a plan without having to physically travel and expose themselves to any risk. So NRIs need not postpone making this crucial decision until their subsequent visit to India.

(The writer is Head - Term Insurance, Policybazaar.com)

Managing portfolios

THINKINVESTOR

To ensure that you do not get carried away by your trading success, it is optimal that for some time you manage either the core or the explore portfolio, not both

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Balancing your investments to achieve your life goals and generate short-term gains is important. Here, we will discuss why you must create two portfolios – one to meet your life goals and the other, to capture short-term fluctuations in the market.

Core and explore

The core portfolio is created to meet your life goals. It is typically set up through a systematic investment plan (SIP) on an equity fund and a recurring deposit with a bank. If you are pursuing two goals, you must have two equity funds and two recurring deposits. It is behaviourally optimal to simultaneously set up a trading account to capture short-term fluctuations in the market. Why?

Your SIPs accumulate wealth and may set you on the path to achieving your life goals. And yet, you could suffer regret when your friends and extended family share their experience about capturing short-term gains from trading in the stock market. The suggestion to set up a trading portfolio is to moderate this regret and experience the emotional satisfaction of generating short-term gains. Consider this as an 'explore' portfolio as you comb the stock market for suitable trading opportunities.

Of course, this requires you to understand how to trade in the market. You could either learn to read chart patterns or subscribe to newsletters that offer trading advice. Fortunately, our brain is predisposed to recognising patterns. So, reading the chart patterns should not be difficult. Now, creating a core and explore portfolio moderates two biases – myopia and hyperopia. Myopia refers to an individual's bias towards the short term at the expense of compromising his/her long-term well-being. Individuals who only have a trading (explore) portfolio and do not purposefully make investments to achieve life goals suffer from myopia. On the other hand, individuals who only set up SIPs to achieve their life goals and do not have a trading portfolio suffer from hyperopia – concentrating only on the long-term and in the process, depriving themselves of the emotional satisfaction that comes from capturing short-term gains from trading.

After overcoming the fear of trading and learning to moderate regret when trades generate losses, it will be tempting to divert capital from your core portfolio to the explore portfolio to generate short-term gains. To ensure that you do not get carried away by your trading success, it is optimal that for some time you manage either the core or the explore portfolio, not both. You could let your spouse or sibling manage the other.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks (SFBs)				
AU SFB	7.75	6.10	7.75	7.20
Capital SFB	7.50	7.10	7.10	7.10
Equitas SFB	8.00	7.50	7.75	7.00
ESAF SFB	8.10	6.00	5.75	5.25
Fincare SFB	8.11	7.25	7.00	7.00
Jana SFB	8.10	7.25	8.10	7.25
Suryoday SFB	8.51	7.00	7.25	6.75
Ujjivan SFB	8.00	6.50	7.20	7.20
Utkarsh SFB	8.00	7.50	7.50	7.50
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	7.26	6.75	7.00	7.00
Bandhan Bank	8.00	7.25	7.25	5.85
DBS Bank	7.25	6.25	6.50	6.50
DCB Bank	7.85	7.25	7.85	7.60
HDFC Bank	7.00	6.60	7.00	7.00
ICICI Bank	7.00	6.60	7.00	7.00
IDFC First Bank	7.50	6.75	7.50	7.00
Karnataka Bank	7.30	6.80	5.75	5.75
Karur Vysya Bank	7.25	6.50	7.00	6.25
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.10	6.90	6.50	6.20
Nainital Bank	7.05	6.60	6.25	5.75
RBL Bank	7.80	7.00	7.00	7.00
SBM Bank India	8.40	7.05	8.40	7.75
South Indian Bank	7.40	6.60	6.50	6.00
TMB	8.00	7.25	6.50	6.50
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	7.05	6.75	6.75	6.25
Bank of India	7.05	6.00	6.50	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	7.00	6.25	6.00	5.75
Canara Bank	7.15	6.75	6.50	6.50
Indian Bank	7.00	6.10	6.25	6.25
Indian Overseas Bank	7.00	6.40	6.50	6.50
Punjab National Bank	7.25	6.75	6.75	6.50
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.25*	6.25	6.25	6.25
State Bank of India	7.10	6.80	6.50	6.50
Union Bank of India	7.30	6.30	7.30	6.70
Foreign Banks				
Citibank	7.77	7.25	3.50	3.50
Deutsche Bank	7.50	6.75	7.50	7.50
HSBC Bank	7.00	3.10	7.00	6.00

*Punjab & Sind Bank e-ADVANTAGE Fixed Deposit Scheme against 601 days is only available for online mode

Source:Paisabazaar.com

Home Loan Interest Rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %)
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India*	8.85-9.75	8.85-9.65	8.85-9.65
Bank of Baroda	8.90-10.65	8.90-10.65	8.90-10.90
Union Bank of India	8.85-10.75	8.85-10.95	8.85-10.95
Punjab National Bank	8.85-9.60	8.80-9.50	8.80-9.50
Bank of India	8.85-10.85	8.85-10.85	8.85-10.85
Canara Bank	9.00-13.80	9.00-13.80	9.00-13.80
UCO Bank	8.85-10.40	8.85-10.40	8.85-10.40
Punjab and Sind Bank	8.85-9.95	8.85-9.95	8.85-9.95
Indian Overseas Bank	9.55-10.95	8.60 onwards	8.60 onwards
Indian Bank	8.75-10.40	8.75-10.40	8.75-10.40
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	8.65 onwards	8.65 onwards	8.65 onwards
ICICI Bank	8.75-9.55	8.75-9.70	8.75-9.80
Axis Bank	8.75-12.70	8.75-12.70	8.75-9.15
South Indian Bank	9.60-12.35	9.60-12.35	9.60-12.35
Karur Vysya Bank	8.95-11.85	8.95-11.85	8.95-11.85
Karnataka Bank	9.02-10.19	9.02-10.19	9.02-10.29
Federal Bank	10.15-10.20	10.20-10.25	10.25-10.30
Dhanlaxmi Bank	9.15-10.30	9.15-10.30	9.15-10.30
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	9.10-9.60	9.10-9.60	9.10-9.60
Bandhan Bank	8.65-14.00	8.65-14.00	8.65-14.00
CSB Bank	9.69	9.69	9.94
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	8.65-10.10	8.65-10.30	8.65-10.50
HDFC Ltd.	8.45-10.35	8.45-10.60	8.45-10.70
Bajaj Housing Finance	8.75 onwards	8.75 onwards	8.70 onwards
Tata Capital	8.95 onwards	8.95 onwards	8.95 onwards
PNB Housing Finance	8.50-14.50	8.50-13.00	8.50-10.85
GIC Housing Finance	8.45 onwards	8.45 onwards	8.45 onwards
Repco Home Finance	9.25 onwards	9.25 onwards	9.25 onwards
Indiabulls Housing	9.30 onwards	9.30 onwards	9.30 onwards
Aditya Birla Capital	8.75-14.50	8.75-14.50	8.75-14.50
ICICI Home Finance	9.20 onwards	9.20 onwards	9.20 onwards
Godrej Housing Finance	8.64 onwards	8.64 onwards	8.64 onwards

*Concession of 0.10% on the applicable interest rates for Shaurya and Shaurya Flexi Home Loans

Rates as on February 15 Source:Paisabazaar.com

KHARTOUM

Sudan's paramilitary chief calls 2021 military coup a mistake

REUTERS

The deputy head of Sudan's ruling council, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, said the 2021 military coup was a "mistake" that has invigorated remnants of ousted ruler Omar al-Bashir's regime. Sudan is caught in turmoil since the coup led by Army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, derailing a brief transition to civilian rule. AFP

ISTANBUL

Blinken tours Turkey's earthquake affected zone, pledges $100 mn

AFP

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken took a helicopter tour of one of the provinces worst-affected by the February 6 earthquake in southern Turkey and northern Syria and pledged a further $100 million in aid to help the region. He is also set to discuss Sweden and Finland's efforts to join NATO, which Turkey has delayed. AP

TEXAS

3 teenage girls, including one who was pregnant, killed in shooting

AP

Three teenage girls, including one who was pregnant, were fatally shot by a man in a Houston suburb on Saturday. He also sexually assaulted a 12-year-old girl who later escaped. The gunman then fatally shot himself. The killings occurred at the home of the gunman's girlfriend. The girls who were killed were 19, 14 and 13. AP

SAN FRANCISCO

After Twitter, Facebook-owner Meta to roll out paid subscription

AFP

Facebook and Instagram owner Meta will launch a paid subscription service starting at $11.99 a month allowing users to verify their accounts, CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced Sunday, following a similar move by Elon Musk at Twitter. Meta Verified will roll out first in Australia and New Zealand this week. AFP

Blinken, Wang Yi trade accusations over shooting down of 'spy balloon'

Officials from both countries meet for the first time since the incident; the U.S. Secretary of State warns that 'this irresponsible act must never again occur'; China calls U.S. actions a violation of the International Civil Aviation Covenant

Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

Top diplomats of the U.S. and China have held their first talks following the recent crisis in relations over the shooting down of a Chinese "spy balloon", with both sides trading accusations over the incident.

Meeting on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference this past weekend, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who cancelled a highly anticipated trip to China over the balloon, met Chinese Politburo member and Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission Wang Yi.

Mr. Blinken "directly spoke to the unacceptable violation of U.S. sovereignty and international law by the PRC high-altitude surveillance balloon in U.S. airspace, underscoring that this irresponsible act must never again occur", State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

Blame game: Antony Blinken, right, told Wang Yi that the U.S. will not stand for any violation of its sovereignty. FILE PHOTO

"The Secretary made clear the United States will not stand for any violation of our sovereignty, and that the PRC's high altitude surveillance balloon program – which has intruded into the air space of over 40 countries across 5 continents –has been exposed to the world."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry, which pointed out that Mr. Blinken had sought the meeting, in a statement said Mr. Wang had conveyed China's "strong position" that "what the U.S. side has done was apparently an abuse of the use of force and violation of customary international practice and the International Civil Aviation Covenant."

"China deplores it and strongly protests it," he said. "It is the U.S. who is in fact the number one country in terms of surveillance, whose high-altitude balloons illegally flew over China multiple times."

'Fix the damage'

Warning of the consequences to relations, Mr. Wang said the U.S. "needs to...demonstrate sincerity, and acknowledge and resolve the damage its abuse of force has done to China-U.S. relations." "If the U.S. side continues to fuss over, dramatise and escalate the unintended and isolated incident, it should not expect the Chinese side to flinch. The U.S. side should be prepared to bear all consequence arising from an escalation," he warned.

Mr. Blinken said the U.S. "will compete and will unapologetically stand up for our values and interests, but that we do not want conflict with the PRC and are not looking for a new Cold War." Mr. Wang, for his part, reminded the U.S. of its commitments on the Taiwan issue calling for it to "follow through on its statement of 'not supporting Taiwan independence'".

Both sides also differed on the Ukraine crisis, and Mr. Blinken had "warned about the consequences if China provides material support to Russia or assistance with systemic sanctions evasion." Mr. Wang rejected the warning, saying China "does not accept the U.S.'s finger-pointing or even coercion targeting China-Russia relations."

Israeli air strike on Syrian capital kills 15 persons including two women

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

An Israeli air strike on Damascus killed 15 persons on early Sunday and badly damaged a building in a district housing state security agencies, a war monitor said.

Civilians, including two women, were among those killed in "the deadliest Israeli attack in the Syrian capital" since the civil war began, said Rami Abdel Rahman of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Damaged buildings

The overnight strike cratered a road and wrecked the adjacent 10-storey building in the Kafr Sousa district, which is home to senior state officials and Syrian intelligence headquarters, said the Britain-based Observatory.

A woman was also killed in the Mazraa district, possibly hit when Syrian anti-aircraft munitions crashed down, it added. It was not immediately clear who was the intended target of the strike, which AFP correspondents reported shook Damascus and left a gaping hole in the street.

Gaping hole: The site of a rocket attack, in central Damascus's Kafr Sousa neighbourhood in Syria on Sunday. REUTERS

Other missiles overnight hit a warehouse used by pro-regime Iranian and Hezbollah fighters near Damascus, said the Observatory.

Iranian news agency *Tasnim* said "no Iranian was harmed", adding that the strikes hit "exactly the spot" where Hezbollah's top commander Imad Mughniyeh was killed in a 2008 car bombing the Shiite group blamed on Israel.

Syria's Defence Ministry gave an initial death toll of five, including one soldier, and 15 wounded civilians, some in critical condition.

Turkey ends quake rescue efforts except in two worst-affected provinces: official

Agence France-Presse
ISTANBUL

Turkey has ended rescue efforts in all provinces except the two hardest hit by last week's massive quake that killed tens of thousands of people, the Turkish disaster agency said Sunday.

"In many of our provinces, search and rescue efforts have been completed. They continue in Kahramanmaras and Hatay provinces," the agency's chief Yunus Sezer told reporters in Ankara.

The epicentre of the 7.8-magnitude earthquake on February 6 was in Pazarcik district in Kahramanmaras.

Mr. Sezer said search and rescue efforts continued at around 40 buildings in the provinces on the 14th day, but expected this number to fall by Sunday evening.

Over 44,000 dead

The agency head also said Turkey's death toll had risen to 40,689. The total death toll including Syria is now 44,377.

Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay said Saturday that some 1,05,000 buildings either collapsed, needed to be demolished or were severely damaged in the quake.

On Saturday, rescuers found a man and a woman alive in the 296th hour in the southern Turkish city of Antakya but their three children did not survive, local media said.

North Korea makes fresh threats against drills; U.S. bombers fly after ICBM test

Associated Press
SEOUL

North Korea said on Sunday its latest Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) test was meant to further bolster its "fatal" nuclear attack capacity and threatened additional powerful steps over upcoming military drills between the U.S. and South Korea.

The U.S. responded by flying long-range supersonic bombers in a show of force later on Sunday for separate joint exercises with South Korean and Japanese warplanes.

Saturday's ICBM test, the North's first missile test since January 1, signals its leader Kim Jong-Un is using his rivals' drills as a chance to expand his country's nuclear arsenal to get the upper hand in future dealings with the U.S. An expert says North Korea may seek to hold regular operational exercises involving its ICBMs.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said its launch of the Hwasong-15 ICBM was organised "suddenly" without prior notice at Mr. Kim's direct order.

Later on Sunday, U.S. B-1B bombers and other aircraft separately trained with South Korean and Japanese fighter jets over and near the Korean Peninsula. A South Korean military statement said Sunday's training reaffirmed Washington's "iron-clad" security commitment to South Korea.

Sport

Purcell scripts a gritty come-from-behind triumph

CHENNAI OPEN

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Reigning Wimbledon doubles champion Max Purcell held his nerve, saving two match points in the second set, to script a come-from-behind win and clinch the Chennai Open ATP Challenger 100 tournament here on Sunday.

The Australian prevailed over American Nicolas Moreno De Alboran 5-7, 7-6(2), 6-4 in a match that lasted more than three hours.

It was an evenly-matched contest where both players had a fair number of chances to break serve early in the first set.

Eventually, in the 12th game, Alboran got two breakpoints with three unforced errors from Purcell and went ahead when the Australian hit a backhand long.

Marathon: Purcell prevailed over Alboran in a match that lasted more than three hours. M. VEDHAN

Alboran seized the momentum early in the second set by breaking the Australian in the sixth game.

The American produced a few winners and pushed Purcell behind the baseline to force the errors to go ahead 4-2.

Serving for the match at 5-3, Alboran seemed to tighten up and hit four unforced errors on his forehand to surrender the break.

But in the next game at 5-4, Alboran seemed to strike with freedom and raced to 15-40 with a backhand slice pass.

With the match on the line, Purcell managed to hold on with a few good first serves to stay in the game and win the tie-break 7-2.

In the final set, Alboran started poorly, getting broken for love.

But a lucky net cord in the next game and a few unforced errors from Purcell allowed him to break back immediately.

Serving to stay in the match at 4-5, Alboran double-faulted twice from advantage before hitting a weak forehand into the net to give the title to Purcell.

Caravan shifts to Bengaluru

Sumit Nagal will hope to build on his semifinal finish in Chennai at the Bengaluru Open ATP Challenger starting on Monday.

But Ramkumar Ramanathan fell at the first hurdle in the qualifying round after a 3-6, 7-5, 6-3 loss to Japan's Yasutaka Uchiyama. Mukund Sasikumar and Prajnesh Gunneswaran progressed.

Select results (qualifying, first round): Mukund Sasikumar bt Andrew Paulson (Cze) 6-1, 6-4; Prajnesh Gunneswaran bt Benjamin Lock (Zim) 7-5, 6-4; Nikola Milojevic (Srb) bt Krish Tyagi 6-2, 7-6.

James McCabe (Aus) bt Digvijay Pratap Singh 6-1, 7-5; Hiroki Moriya (Jpn) bt Sidharth Rawat 7-5, 6-2; Carlos Sanchez Jover (Esp) bt Manish Ganesh 6-1, 7-6.

High Command in line for hat-trick

HYDERABAD: Trainer L.V.R. Deshmukh's High Command, who is in great heart should score a hat-trick in the Deccan Bookmakers Association Alcock Arabian Million (Gr.3), the main attraction of Monday's races.

1 CHARON PLATE (1,100m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II) – 1.20 p.m.: 1. Colt Pistol (1) Imran Chisty 56, 2. Deccan Spirit (4) D.S. Deora 56, 3. Indian Sniper (8) Kiran Naidu 56, 4. Thunder Knight (6) Aneel 56, 5. Bold Beauty (3) Santosh Raj 54.5, 6. Livemore (7) Afroz Khan 54.5, 7. Warwick (2) P. Ajeeth Kumar 54.5 and 8. Zadelle (5) S. Saqlain 54.5.
1. WARWICK, 2. LIVEMORE, 3. COLD PISTOL

2 PRINCE PRADEEP PLATE (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 (Cat. III) – 1.50: 1. Exclusive Luck (7) Md. Ismail 60, 2. That's My Way (8) Afroz Khan 60, 3. First Class (2) D.S. Deora 59.5, 4. Aiza (1) Mukesh Kumar 57.5, 5. Sweet Melody (4) Aneel 57.5, 6. Red River (6) Md. Ekram Alam 55.5, 7. Call Of The Blue (9) Gaurav Singh 54.5, 8. Dream Jewel (10) Sonu Kumar 54, 9. Space Time (5) P. Sai Kumar 54 and 10. Ar Superior (3) Santosh Raj 52.
1. FIRST CLASS, 2. AIZA, 3. SWEET MELODY

3 ONNU ONNU ONNU PLATE (Div. II) (1,600m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 2.20: 1. Master Touch (9) Mukesh Kumar 60, 2. Amalfitana (8) Kuldeep S 56.5, 3. Cash Register (5) B. Nikhil 55.5, 4. Royal Pal (3) R.S. Jodha 55, 5. Arrowtown (10) D.S. Deora 53.5, 6. Spectacular Cruise (7) S. Saqlain 53, 7. Sucker Punch (4) Afroz Khan 52.5, 8. Sundance Kid (6) Abhay Singh 52.5, 9. Muaser (2) P. Ajeeth Kumar 51.5 and 10. Sea Of Class (1) P. Sai Kumar 50.5.
1. MASTER TOUCH, 2. CASH REGISTER, 3. AMALFITANA

4 RAJA R.J.K. RANGA RAO, ZAMINDAR OF CHIKKAVARAM MEMORIAL CUP (1,600m), (Terms) 4-y-o & above (Cat. II) – 2.55: 1. General Atlantic (4) Gaurav Singh 59.5, 2. Stunning Force (1) Mohit Singh 59.5, 3. N R I Superpower (6) Imran Chisty 58, 4. Mark My Day (2) Nakhat Singh 57.5, 5. Kesariya Balam (3) S.Saqlain 54.5 and 6. Royal Grace (5) Afroz Khan 53.
1. N R I SUPERPOWER, 2. STUNNING FORCE, 3. GENERAL ATLANTIC

5 ONNU ONNU ONNU PLATE (Div. I) (1,600m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III) – 3.30: 1. Advance Guard (2) Surya Prakash 60, 2. Pacific Command (3) Abhay Singh 59, 3. Explosive (4) A.A. Vikrant 56.5, 4. Quality Warrior (8) Aneel 55, 5. Akash (5) S. Saqlain 53.5, 6. Good Tidings (6) Mohit Singh 53.5, 7. Wot's Up Jay (7) Mukesh Kumar 53.5, 8. Arba Wahed Arba (9) P.S. Chouhan 52.5, 9. I Am Superman (10) D.S. Deora 52.5, 10. My Marvel (11) P. Ajeeth Kumar 51.5 and 11. Lady Danger (1) B. Nikhil 50.
1. WOT'S UP JAY, 2. ARBA WAHED ARBA, 3. MY MARVEL

6 MIRZA ZUNNUR AHMED MEMORIAL CUP (2,000m), rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II) – 4.05: 1. Francis Bacon (7) Kuldeep S 60, 2. N R I Sun (8) Imran Chisty 57, 3. Miss Marvellous (5) Mukesh Kumar 56.5, 4. Alabama (3) Suraj Narredu 54, 5. Fly Tothe Stars (10) P.S. Chouhan 54, 6. Princess Daka (2) Abhay Singh 54, 7. Just Incredible (9) P. Ajeeth Kumar 53.5, 8. Carnival Lady (6) B. Nikhil 51.5, 9. Starwalt (1) Surya Prakash 51 and 10. Team Player (4) Gaurav Singh 51.
1. FRANCIS BACON, 2. N R I SUN, 3. ALABAMA

7 DECCAN BOOKMAKERS ASSOCIATION ALCOCK ARABIAN MILLION (Gr. 3) (1,400m) (Terms), 3-y-o only – 4.40: 1. High Command (1) S. Saqlain 57.5, 2. Brilliant Star (5) Suraj Narredu 54.5, 3. Caraxes (4) D.S. Deora 51.5, 4. Verrocchio (3) Santosh Raj 51.5 and 5. Windsor (2) Afroz Khan 50.
1. HIGH COMMAND, 2. BRILLIANT STAR

8 GENTLE SPY PLATE (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated upto 25 – 5.15: 1. Cape Town (12) Mohit Singh 60, 2. Delhi Heights (14) B. Nikhil 60, 3. Riffa (9) Mukesh Kumar 60, 4. Shazia (11) D.S. Deora 60, 5. Blue Label (2) R.S. Jodha 59.5, 6. Chica Bonita (6) A.A. Vikrant 59, 7. Black Opal (3) S. Saqlain 58.5, 8. Silver Lining (5) Rafique Sk. 58.5, 9. Canterbury (4) Aneel 58, 10. Honourable Lady (10) Santosh Raj 57.5, 11. Good Day (1) Nakhat Singh 56, 12. Ikra (8) P. Sai Kumar 55.5, 13. Alina (13) P. Ajeeth Kumar 52.5 and 14. Ella Eldingar (7) G. Naresh 52.5.
1. SILVER LINING, 2. DELHI HEIGHTS, 3. RIFFA

Day's Best: HIGH COMMAND
Jackpot: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8; Mini Jackpot (i): 2, 3, 4 & 5; (ii): 5, 6, 7 & 8.
Treble (i): 1, 2 & 3, (ii): 3, 4 & 5, (iii): 6, 7 & 8. Tanala: All races.

MEMENTO

Cummins' gift to Pujara for completing 100 Tests

Australia captain Pat Cummins presented Cheteshwar Pujara with a signed Australian team's Test jersey to honour the India batter for playing his 100th Test on Sunday. The Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI) on Sunday posted a photo of Cummins handing over the jersey to Pujara.

ALL TOO EASY

England hardly breaks a sweat to win first Test

England wrapped up a thumping 267-run victory over New Zealand on the fourth day of the first Test at Mount Maunganui on Sunday. **The scores:** England 325/9 decl. & 374 bt New Zealand 306 & 126 in 45.3 overs (Daryl Mitchell 57, Anderson 4/18, Broad 4/49). PoM: Harry Brook.

INJURED

Neymar stretchered off during PSG's match against Lille

PSG forward Neymar was forced off the pitch on a stretcher on Sunday after twisting his right ankle in a league match against Lille. Neymar picked up the injury at the start of the second half after he scored PSG's second goal before the interval. Neymar had damaged the same ankle at the World Cup in Qatar.

TOPPING THE CHART

Ahmedabad Defenders on a winning spree

Ahmedabad Defenders defeated Chennai Blitz 15-11, 15-13, 15-10, 15-9, 15-12 for its third win in-a-row to go to the top of the table with seven points from four matches in the Prime Volleyball League championship in Hyderabad on Sunday. For Chennai, this was the fourth loss in five games.

Australia implodes after yet another Jadeja-Ashwin show

India retains Border-Gavaskar Trophy as the visitors lose nine in the first session; the left-arm spinner returns career-best seven for 42 and the offie chips in with three; Pujara, Bharat take the hosts past the finish line for an unassailable 2-0 lead

AUSTRALIA IN INDIA

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

Wrecker-in-chief: Jadeja cast a magic spell on the Australian batters. V.V. KRISHNAN

Ten days ago, no one would have believed that India was going to keep the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after just six playing days, spread over two Tests.

But the unbelievable happened after two days of even fighting in the second Test. On Sunday morning, Australia courted disaster at the Ferozeshah Kotla after an embarrassing batting display and opened the door for India to race away to a six-wicket victory.

Seen in the foreground of Australia's fighting 263 in the best conditions to bat on this pitch, its shocking free-fall from the overnight 62 for one to 113 in 91 minutes was hard to understand.

Man-of-the-Match Ravindra Jadeja helped himself to a career-best seven for 42 by guiding the visitors to their doom. Thereafter, India traded four wickets for brisk runs to reach the target of 115 in just 26.4 overs.

Cheteshwar Pujara, involved in a mix-up that ended in the run out of a free-stroking Rohit Sharma, put the finishing touches with a boundary after K.S. Bharat's enterprising cameo hastened the end.

But the talking point of the day was Australia's implosion. Armed with a lead of 62 with nine wickets in hand, the team was poised to put India under pressure in the fourth innings. The way Travis Head batted late on Saturday and with Marnus Labuschagne looking in good touch, India knew it had to strike early and repeatedly. The drama unfolded soon.

In the first over, after Head's third-ball boundary, R. Ashwin foxed his man off the fifth delivery.

Bharat took the catch off the edge of Head's defensive bat. Next, Steve Smith's pre-meditated sweep caught him plumb before four wickets sensationally fell at 95. Labuschagne fell to a ball that lacked bounce. The next three wickets came off consecutive deliveries and left Australia tottering at 95 for seven.

After Ashwin had Matthew Renshaw leg-before – now thrice this series – Jadeja's new over saw Peter Handscomb fall to a first-slip catch by Virat Kohli and skipper Pat Cummins bowled, trying to slog-sweep, for an innings hat-trick.

Alex Carey became Jadeja's fifth scalp when his leg-stump lay uprooted following an attempted reverse-sweep.

But Jadeja was not done yet. He bowled Nathan Lyon and debutant Matthew Kuhnemann to end the innings.

Lyon played on before Kunhemann's reverse-sweep saw the ball kiss his gloves and hit the stumps.

Freak dismissal

In India's chase, K.L. Rahul's poor form continued following an unfortunate dismissal. His shot deflected off short-leg fielder Handscomb's knee-guard and Carey completed the catch.

Rohit, looking good to finish the chase in a hurry, was run out. Kohli, after crossing 25,000 international runs, was stumped.

Similarly, Shreyas Iyer fell to his impetuousness by hitting down the throat of Murphy for a 10-ball 12. Bharat smashed a 22-ball 23 to bring India to the threshold of another famous win before Pujara did the honours.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA — 1ST INNINGS
263.
INDIA — 1ST INNINGS
262.
AUSTRALIA — 2ND INNINGS
Usman Khawaja c Shreyas b Jadeja 6 *(13b, 1x4)*, Travid Head c Bharat b Ashwin 43 *(46b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Marnus Labuschagne b Jadeja 35 *(50b, 5x4)*, Steve Smith lbw b Ashwin 9 *(19b, 1x4)*, Matthew Renshaw lbw b Ashwin 2 *(8b)*, Peter Handscomb c Kohli b Jadeja 0 *(3b)*, Alex Carey b Jadeja 7 *(10b, 1x4)*, Pat Cummins b Jadeja 0 *(1b)*, Nathan Lyon b Jadeja 8 *(21b, 1x4)*, Todd Murphy (not out) 3 *(14b)*, Matthew Kuhnemann b Jadeja 0 *(2b)*; Total (in 31.1 overs) 113.
FALL OF WICKETS
1-23 (Khawaja, 5.5 overs), 2-65 (Head, 12.6), 3-85 (Smith, 18.6), 4-95 (Labuschagne, 21.4), 5-95 (Renshaw, 22.6), 6-95 (Handscomb, 23.1), 7-95 (Cummins, 23.2), 8-110 (Carey, 27.1), 9-113 (Lyon, 29.5).
INDIA BOWLING
Ashwin 16-3-59-3, Shami 2-0-10-0, Jadeja 12.1-1-42-7, Axar 1-0-2-0.
INDIA — 2ND INNINGS
Rohit Sharma (run out) 31 *(20b, 3x4, 2x6)*, K.L. Rahul c Carey b Lyon 1 *(3b)*, Cheteshwar Pujara (not out) 31 *(74b, 4x4)*, Virat Kohli st Carey b Murphy 20 *(31b, 3x4)*, Shreyas Iyer c Murphy b Lyon 12 *(10b, 1x4,1x6)*, K.S. Bharat (not out) 23 *(22b 3x4, 1x6)*; Total (for four wkts. in 26.4 overs): 118.
FALL OF WICKETS
1-6 (Rahul, 1.1 overs), 2-39 (Rohit, 6.5), 3-69 (Kohli, 18.2), 4-88 (Shreyas, 21.4 overs).
AUSTRALIA BOWLING
Kuhnemann 7-0-38-0, Lyon 12-3-49-2, Murphy 6.4-2-22-1, Head 1-0-9-0.
India won by six wickets, leads the four-Test series 2-0.
PoM: Jadeja.
Third Test: March 1-5 (Indore).

Jadeja's confidence in his abilities is massive, says Rohit

Nailed: Ashwin triggered a collapse early in the morning session by dealing vital blows. V.V. KRISHNAN

Rakesh Rao
NEW DELHI

Rohit Sharma had reasons to be pleased. After all, in spite of being tested in the first innings, India came out firing on the third morning and closed out a second successive Test in eight sessions.

"Fantastic result for us. After an even first innings, I felt we were trailing because we had to bat last. I think the bowlers were fantastic, to take nine wickets in the first session was commendable," he said.

Rohit said, "In my view, the safer option was to step out and play in front of the pitch. Sweep, it seemed, was not a good choice."

On the Man-of-the-Match Ravindra Jadeja, Rohit said, "It is not easy to make a comeback from injuries. The confidence Jadeja has in his abilities is massive. There were times when he was put under pressure but there was no sense of panic from him. He just relied on what he is best at."

On his part, Jadeja said, "This kind of pitches suit me because the odd ball spins and some stay low. I knew they would play sweeps and reverse-sweeps, so the plan was just keep bowling into the stumps. If they make a mistake, I have a chance. I don't think sweep is a good option against me on this kind of a pitch."

Australia captain Pat Cummins reflected on the series so far and felt that the implosion on Sunday was a "similar story to Nagpur in the second innings. Felt like we were in a really good position (in the first innings). Just probably a few runs short in the end.

Cummins continued, "I would say it's more disappointing, knowing again how these opportunities don't come up all the time, especially after being relatively in front of the game. (Was) Feeling like the game was ours for the taking, but we just missed out."

Rahul relieved of Test vice-captaincy; Unadkat in ODI squad

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

K.L. Rahul has been relieved of vice-captaincy for the remaining two Test matches of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy while Jaydev Unadkat has been recalled into the ODI set-up for the next month's three ODIs versus Australia.

Rohit Sharma will miss the first ODI due to personal reasons. Hardik Pandya, his deputy, will lead the team in Rohit's absence. While the Test squad remained unchanged, the four-member selection panel has not named a vice-captain for the remaining series.

While the BCCI statement didn't specify the chairman of the selection panel, *The Hindu* understands Shiv Sundar Das chaired the meeting.

Unadkat, who on Sunday lifted the Ranji Trophy with Saurashtra, will rejoin the Test squad and also remain a part of the squad for the ODI series. The last time Unadkat featured in an ODI was in November 2013.

Test schedule: Third: March 1-5 (Indore), **Fourth:** March 9-13 (Ahmedabad).
ODI squad: Rohit (Capt.), Hardik Pandya (Vice-capt.), Gill, Kohli, Shreyas, Suryakumar, Rahul, Kishan (wk), Jadeja, Kuldeep, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Shami, Siraj, Umran Malik, Shardul Thakur, Axar and Unadkat.
ODI schedule: March 17 (Mumbai), March 19 (Visakhapatnam), March 22 (Chennai).

India needs to win big against Ireland

WOMEN'S T20 WC

Press Trust of India
GQEBERHA (SOUTH AFRICA)

A defeat against England denting their confidence, India will look to bounce back with a big win against Ireland to remain in contention for a semifinal berth in the Women's T20 World Cup, here on Monday.

After the 11-run loss to England on Saturday, India is in second spot with four points from three matches behind England (six from three straight wins) which has qualified for the semifinals.

The scores:
On Sunday: West Indies Women 116/6 in 20 overs (Rashada Williams 30) bt Pakistan Women 113/5 in 20 overs. **PoM:** Hayley Matthews.
On Saturday: South Africa 124/6 in 20 overs (Tazmin Brits 45) lost to Australia 125/4 in 16.3 overs (Tahlia McGrath 57); **PoM:** Tahlia McGrath.

Skipper Unadkat leads from the front as Saurashtra lifts trophy with nine-wicket victory over Bengal

RANJI FINAL

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

On cloud nine: Saurashtra captain Unadkat and teammates can't hide their joy after winning the Ranji Trophy. PTI

Inspiring skipper Jaydev Unadkat led by example with a six-wicket haul to guide Saurashtra to an authoritative nine-wicket victory over Bengal on Sunday and underscored his team's ascendancy in red-ball cricket by winning the second crown in three seasons on the fourth day of the Ranji Trophy final at the Eden Gardens here.

Facing an uphill task and a deficit of 61 runs, Bengal resumed its fightback from 169 for four to barely avoid the ignominy of an innings defeat at home by posting 241.

In a repeat of the result of the 2020 final back home in Rajkot, Saurashtra chased down the easy target of 12 runs prior to lunch.

The unbeaten pair of captain Manoj Tiwary (68, 154b, 10x4) and Shahbaz Ahmed (27, 38b, 4x4) began in right earnest and added 48 before Shahbaz was run out due to a horrible mix-up with his skipper, who erred in calling for a third run, in the sixth over of the day.

It was a deadly blow as Bengal lost three more wickets in the next six overs with Unadkat, who had scalped Sudip Gharami and Anustup Majumdar overnight, doing most of the damage.

Tiwary poked a wider one from his opposite number to gully, while wicketkeeper-batter Abishek Porel pulled Chetan Sakariya to deep square-leg in consecutive overs.

Unadkat kept it on the stumps to get rid of Akash Deep and Akash Ghatak.

The host's last pair, Ishan Porel and Mukesh Kumar, fought on and used the long handle to garner 36 runs which helped Bengal erase the deficit and make Saurashtra bat again. Unadkat uprooted Porel's off-stump to end the resistance.

Saurashtra lost Jay Gohil before reaching the target in 2.4 overs, with Harvik Desai hitting the winning runs.

Unadkat, who returned to lead the side in the final, scalped six wickets in the innings and nine in the match to named the Player-of-the-Match.

Arpit Vasavada, the season's second highest run-getter (907) and the stand-in captain in a few matches, was the Player-of-the-Tournament.

In a fine gesture, Unadkat asked Vasavada to lift the trophy along with him.

The scores:
Bengal — 1st innings: 174.
Saurashtra — 1st innings: 404.
Bengal — 2nd innings: Sumanta Gupta c Mankad b Sakariya 1, Abhimanyu Easwaran c Harvik b Sakariya 16, Sudip Gharami c Mankad b Unadkat 14, Anustup Majumdar c Vishvaraj b Unadkat 61, Manoj Tiwary c Vishvaraj b Unadkat 68, Shahbaz Ahmed run out 27, Abishek Porel c Bhut b Sakariya 3, Akash Ghatak b Unadkat 4, Akash Deep lbw b Unadkat 1, Mukesh Kumar (not out) 15, Ishan Porel b Unadkat 22; Extras (b-4, lb-2, nb-2, w-1): 9; Total (in 70.4 overs): 241
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-22, 3-47, 4-146, 5-194, 6-198, 7-198, 8-200, 9-205.
Saurashtra bowling: Unadkat 22.4-1-85-6, Sakariya 21-2-76,3, Jani 5-0-12-0, Dharmendra 9-2-29-0, Mankad 9-1-21-0, Bhut 4-0-12-0.
Saurashtra — 2nd innings: Harvik Desai (not out) 4, Jay Gohil c Gharami b Akash Deep 0, Vishvaraj Jadeja (not out) 10; Total (for one wkt. in 2.4 overs): 14.
Fall of wicket: 1-0.
Bengal bowling: Mukesh 1.4-1-9-0, Akash Deep 1-0-5-1.

Rashford shines as United routs Leicester

Agence France-Presse
MANCHESTER

Marcus Rashford scored twice to set up a 3-0 win against Leicester on Sunday as Manchester United closed in on second-place Manchester City and kept the pressure on table-topping Arsenal.

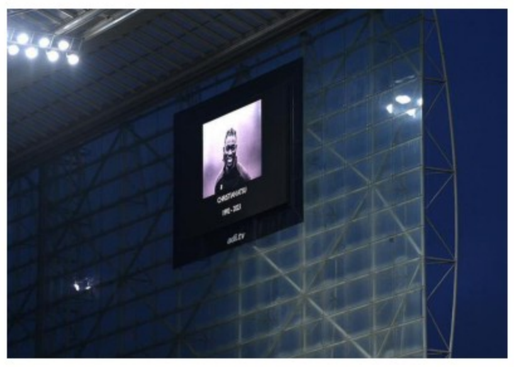
He fired his team in front on 25 minutes at Old Trafford after United withstood an early onslaught from Leicester. He scored a second in the 56th and substitute Jadon Sancho added a third five minutes later.

Important results: Premier League: Tottenham 2 (Emerson 56, Son 72) bt West Ham 0; Manchester United 3 (Rashford 25, 56, Sancho 61) bt Leicester 0. **LaLiga: On Saturday:** Real Sociedad 1 (Oyarzabal 5) drew with Celta Vigo 1 (Le Normand 90+3-og); Osasuna 0 lost to Real Madrid 2 (Valverde 78, Asensio 90+2). **Serie A: On Sunday:** Atalanta 1 (Hojlund 87) lost to Lecce 2 (Ceesay 4, Blin 74);

INBRIEF

Aditi finishes one shot behind Lydia, takes second spot

India's Aditi Ashok fell one shot shy of winning for the second time in three weeks, finishing behind World No. 1 Lydia Ko in the Aramco Saudi Ladies International golf. Aditi, starting the final round two shots behind the leader, shot 4-under 68 and finished 20-under at the $5 million tournament. Lydia (68) saved a crucial par on the 72nd to win by one stroke.



Body of Atsu killed in Turkey earthquake flown home

The remains of former Ghana international footballer Christian Atsu, who died in a devastating earthquake in Turkey, were being flown home on Sunday, the country's foreign ministry said. Atsu, 31, was caught up in a 7.8-magnitude quake that rocked Turkey and Syria on February 6, killing more than 44,000 people in both countries. There were initial reports the former Chelsea and Newcastle player had been rescued a day after the quake, but these turned out to be false and his body was found on Saturday.

Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Kerala enter knockout stage

Delhi lived up to its top billing by blanking Bihar and Petroleum Academy 3-0 and qualified for the under-15 girls' knockout stage in the UTT 84th National inter-State sub-junior team table tennis championships at Alappuzha on Sunday. Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu and Kerala are also assured of knockout berths from other groups.

The results (u-15 girls, inter-State team events): Group A: Delhi bt Bihar 3-0; bt PSPBA 3-0. **Group B**: Uttar Pradesh bt Uttarakhand 3-0; bt Chhattisgarh 3-0. **Group C**: Maharashtra bt Punjab 3-0; bt Goa 3-0. **Group F**: Tamil Nadu bt Odisha 3-0; bt Pondicherry 3-0; Kerala bt Pondicherry 3-2; bt Odisha 3-0. **Group G**: Haryana bt Rajasthan 3-1; Telangana bt Rajasthan 3-1; lost to Karnataka 3-2.

Bopanna & Ebden lose in Rotterdam final

Ivan Dodig and Austin Krajicek pipped Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden 7-6(5), 2-6, [12-10] in the doubles final of the $2,224,460 ATP tennis tournament in Rotterdam on Sunday. The champions team won 500 ATP points and $127,440.

Other results: $60,000 ITF women, Altenkirchen, Germany: Doubles (final): Greet Minnen & Yanina Wickmayer (Bel) bt Jessy Rompies (Ina) & Prarthana Thombare 6-0, 6-2.

Punam scores five as Odisha defeats Rajasthan

Punam Barla scored five goals to help Odisha record a 13-1 victory over Rajasthan in the 13th Hockey India senior National women's championship at Kakinada on Sunday.

The results:
Odisha 13 (Aten Topno 2, Punam Barla 5, Anupa Barla, Dipti Barla, Asmita Barla 2, Rinki Kukur 2) bt Rajasthan 1 (Sarita).
Karnataka 2 (J. Chandana 2) bt Chandigarh 1 (Reetu Devi).
Chhattisgarh 4 (Pooja Yadav, Sulochna, Anjali Mahato 2) bt Uttarakhand 1 (Preeti Sharma).
Madhya Pradesh 4 (Manmeet Kaur, Anjali Gautam, Preeti Dubey 2) bt Manipur 1 (Kshetrimayum Sonia).
Bihar 2 (Kajal Lakra, Nutan Topno) bt Assam 0.

LIVE TELECAST

NBA All-Star game: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 6 a.m.
Badminton: Asia Mixed Team C'ships, Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 1.30 p.m.
Women's T20 World Cup: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 6.30 p.m.
PVL: Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 3 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 p.m.
I-League: Eurosport (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.15 a.m. (Tuesday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Top performers: The 2022 National Car and Motorcycle racing champions, along with Arun Mammen. R. RAGU

Madras Motor Sports Club honours national championship winners

With a pedigree for over four decades, the MRF brand name in racing now competes and wins globally, says Arun Mammen

MOTORSPORTS

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

The Madras Motor Sports Club celebrated its 70th anniversary and awarded trophies to the winners of the recently-concluded MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle and Car Racing Championships on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, MMSC president Ajit Thomas thanked long-time sponsor MRF Tyres for their support over the past decades and also the riders and drivers for their participation in large numbers in the national championships.

Arun Mammen, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, MRF Ltd, was the chief guest for the function and gave away the prizes.

Later, MMSC Vice-President Vicky Chandhok presented a brief history of MMSC and announced that a CIK-approved go-karting circuit is being built at the MIC which will be ready by August this year.

Speaking at the function, Arun Mammen outlined the company's involvement in motorsport since the 1980s, and said: "With a pedigree for over four decades, the MRF brand name in racing now competes and wins globally.

"It is a matter of pride for India that MRF achieved yet another first – winning the 2022 European Rally Championship with tyres developed and manufactured in India. It is also heartening to note that these championships are enabling our riders and drivers to hone their skills and take it to international levels."

The winners:
National champions: **Two-wheeler**: **Pro-Stock 301-400cc**: **Rider**: Rajini Krishnan (RACR Castrol Power1); **Team**: Petronas TVS Racing; **Manufacturer**: Yamaha.
Pro-Stock 165cc: **Rider**: Mathana Kumar (Pacer Yamaha); **Team**: Pacer Yamaha; **Manufacturer**: Yamaha.
Novice (Stock 165cc): **Rider**: Sarvesh Balappa (Axor Sparks Racing); **Team**: Axor Sparks Racing; **Manufacturer**: Yamaha.
Girls (Stock 165cc): **Rider**: Jagruti Kiran Penkar (Axor Sparks Racing); **Team**: Alpha Racing; **Manufacturer**: Yamaha.
One-make: **TVS Open** (Apache RR 310): Rahil Pillarisetty (Hyderabad); **TVS Novice** (Apache RTR 200): Chiranth Vishwanath (Bengaluru); **TVS Girls** (Apache RTR 200): Aditi Krishnan (Bengaluru).
Idemitsu Honda India Talent Cup (Open NSF 250R): Sarthak Shrikant Chavan (Pune); Novice (CBR 150): Raheesh Mudassar Khatri (Mumbai).
Four-wheeler: **MRF Formula 2000**: Sai Sanjay (Salem); **Indian Touring Cars**: Driver: Arjun Balu (Race Concepts); **Team**: Rayo Racing; **Indian Junior Touring Cars**: **Driver**: Akkineni Anand Prasad (Team Performance); **Team**: Team Performance Racing.
Super Stock: **Driver**: Ritesh Rai (Team Performance); **Team**: Redline Racing.
Formula LGB 1300: **Driver**: Viswas Vijayaraj (DTS Racing); **Team**: Redline Racing (Chennai).
Volkswagen Polo Cup: Pratik Sonawane (Mumbai); MRF Saloons (Toyota Etios): **Driver**: Justin Singh (Redline Racing); **Team**: Redline Racing.

Smriti. PTI

Smriti named RCB captain

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore has expectedly named senior India batter Smriti Mandhana as their captain for the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL).

The left-handed India vice-captain was signed in the recent auction held in Mumbai for ₹3.40 crore, the highest price for a player in the WPL auction.

Shivaji

Shivaji creates meet record

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

P.M. Shivaji created a meet record in the 10,000m under-20 men's event of the Karnataka State youth and junior athletic meet here on Sunday.

Shivaji's timing of 31:34.3s erased the old mark of 31:38.0s set by Narsingh Patel.

Ogana's brace helps Sreenidi down Sudeva

The hero: Sreenidi's Ogana, right, in action against Sudeva Delhi on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

I-LEAGUE

Sports Bureau
HYDERABAD

Substitute Louis Ogana scored twice in the final 10 minutes to help Sreenidi Deccan FC defeat Sudeva Delhi FC 3-1 in the Hero I-League here at the Deccan Arena on Sunday.

Sreenidi now tops the table with 40 points, while Sudeva remained at the bottom.

The home team went on the offensive from the word go, but it was Sudeva which took the lead through teenager Biaktea, who dribbled his way past the rival defence and finished coolly in the 29th minute.

The second-half was a similar story with Sreenidi being more aggressive and the equaliser came through captain David Castaneda's powerful header, which beat the custodian Priyant Singh in the 71st minute.

Ogana was on hand to give the finishing touch to Lalromawia's layoff and put Sreenidi ahead in the 81st minute.

Powerful strike

He then sealed the points with a powerful strike one minute from the end for his fifth goal of the campaign.

The results:
Sreenidi Deccan 3 (Castaneda, Ogana 2) bt Sudeva Delhi 1 (Biaktea); Churchill 0 lost to Gokulam Kerala 1 (Farshad Noor).
On Saturday: At Mumbai: Kenkre 0 drew with Rajasthan United 0.
At Srinagar: Real Kashmir 3 (Kynshi 2, Boateng) bt Mohammedan Sporting 2 (Murzaev, Davis).

Himashi clinches 63kg cadet girls' gold

Sports Bureau

Himashi Tokas of Madhya Pradesh bagged the 63kg cadet girls' gold in the National cadet and sub-junior judo championships in Chennai on Sunday.

The results (winners only):

Cadet boys:
81kg: Ravi (Har); **90kg:** N. Sheetal (Man).
+90kg: Yash Yadav (UP).
Cadet girls: 63kg: Himashi Tokas (MP).
70kg: Khushi (Del); **+70kg:** Kanwarpreet Kaur (Pun).

Kerala crashes out; Punjab, Karnataka enter semifinals

Midfield tussle: Kerala's Abdu Raheem, right, and Punjab's Parmit fight for possession. AIFF

SANTOSH TROPHY

Sports Bureau

Defending champion Kerala crashed out of the 76th Santosh Trophy National football championship after a 1-1 draw with Punjab in Bhubaneswar on Sunday which saw it finish third in Group-A with eight poinits.

Punjab, the Group-A topper with 11 points, and second placed Karnataka (9 points) qualified for the semifinals which will be held in Riyadh in the first week of March.

Services had made the grade from Group-B on Saturday and the last berth will be confirmed on Monday after the final set of matches from the group.

Karnataka drew with host Odisha 2-2 while Maharashtra bt Goa 2-0 in other matches in Group A.

The results (Group A):
Kerala 1 (Vishak Mohanan 24) drew with Punjab 1 (Rohit Sheikh 34); Karnataka 2 (M. Sunil Kumar 17, Shajan Franklin 50) drew with Odisha 2 (Prabin Tigga 21, Chandra Muduli 35); Maharashtra 2 (Himanshu Patil 5 & 89) bt Goa 0.

Group A (final placings): 1. Punjab (11 pts), 2. Karnataka (9), 3. Kerala (8), 4. Maharashtra (6), 5. Odisha (5), 6. Goa (0).

I'm proud of what this team has achieved, says Unadkat

RANJI FINAL

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Jaydev Unadkat on Sunday said that Saurashtra's second Ranji Trophy win spoke of his team's dominance in recent times.

After leading Saurashtra to a comprehensive nine-wicket win over host Bengal in the final at the Eden Gardens here, Unadkat said his side had been performing well in all conditions.

"A lot of guys said we were suited to our conditions, but that wasn't (the case). It was important to win this one to prove the dominance and to show that this era, the decade belong to Saurashtra. I'm proud of what this team has achieved," said Unadkat.

"Three trophies (including the Vijay Hazare Trophy this season) in three years proves that we have been doing a lot of things right. It was down to playing better cricket and that's what we did in four days."

On fire: Unadkat led from the front and was named the player of the match. PTI

Fitting tribute

Unadkat said the win was a fitting tribute to another teammate Cheteshwar Pujara, who played his 100th Test for India in the series against Australia in Delhi.

The Saurashtra skipper said Bengal fought well. "It was a good contest till today's morning, they were in the game. We bowled in the right areas, better than their bowlers a lot of times. Our batters showed more composure and resilience.

"There was more calmness in our dressing room. They wanted to win it very eagerly, as it was at Eden. It happened to us as well while playing (the final) in Rajkot (in 2020)."

Unadkat acknowledged the contribution of Arpit Vasavada, who gathered 907 runs in the season and captained in a few matches.

Bengal captain Manoj Tiwary said losing the toss was a huge disadvantage as Saurashtra pacers benefitted from the moisture on a fresh pitch to torment the home batters in the first innings.

"Our bowlers bowled in a good channel throughout the season but could not do so in this match," said Tiwary, adding that catching up was always tough against a quality opponent.

Tiwary accepted that his call, due to some visibility issue deep in the field, resulting in Shahbaz's run out on Sunday was a turning point as a good partnership would have helped Bengal stay in the contest.

East Bengal stuns Mumbai City FC

ISL-9

Shayan Acharya
MUMBAI

East Bengal FC stunned Indian Super League (ISL) Shield winner Mumbai City FC with a 1-0 win in the ISL here on Sunday.

Coming into the game following a 1-2 defeat against Bengaluru FC, the Islanders hoped to return to winning ways in its last league game before moving on to the semifinal.

But featuring in its penultimate game before the much-awaited Kolkata derby against ATK Mohun Bagan, East Bengal boosted its confidence as it rode on a Naorem Mahesh Singh goal in the 52nd minute to pull off its sixth win this season.

Cleiton Sliva - the top scorer in the league - delivered a cross for Naorem from the right and the latter, after a quick turn, found the back of the net.

Though the hosts had few opportunities to equalise, things did not go their way.

In the absence of Greg Stewart – Mumbai City's primary attacking midfielder – MCFC failed to open the goal-mouth despite playing an attacking brand of football and creating enough opportunities.

In the 62nd minute, Rowllin Borges came up with a corner and Halen Nongtdu put an acrobatic effort to strike on target, but Kamaljit refused to be beaten.

The result: Mumbai City FC 0 lost to East Bengal FC 1 (Naorem Mahesh Singh 52).